THE BOOK OF
MANY
THINGS

THE BOOK OF MANY THINGS™

CRAIG J SPEARING

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On the Cover

Asteria ponders the magic, mystery, and mayhem of the *Deck of Many Things* in this menagerie of moments by Ekaterina Burmak.

On the Alt-Cover

Asteria wields the cards that rewrote her fate in this art nouveau–inspired illustration by CoupleofKooks.

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CHAPTER 1

FOOL

Welcome to *The Book of Many Things*, whose twenty-two chapters give you character options, magic items, spells, monsters, ready-to-play adventures, DM advice, and setting elements designed to be dropped into your own campaign. And tying those chapters together is a legendary magic item that every player both dreads and longs for: the *Deck of Many Things*.

For decades, DMs have used this infamous deck in their games, often with explosive results. Characters have been whisked off to extradimensional prisons, slain by death itself, lost levels, and earned the enmity of powerful fiends. But they've also gained vast wealth or a stronghold of their own, rewound time to reverse disaster, or suddenly advanced in level far beyond the other characters in the group. The awesome powers of the *Deck of Many Things* have given it a reputation as a game breaker. An encounter with the deck can spell the end of an otherwise successful campaign, as the DM's carefully prepared storyline and the players' lovingly created characters are scattered by the winds of fate to the corners of the multiverse.

But it doesn't have to be that way. You can tailor the *Deck of Many Things* to your campaign, shaping it to fit your needs and the tastes of your players. You can stack the deck with low-level effects that prompt roleplaying instead of mechanical changes or create a deck that has only good cards (or bad ones!) in it. You can do all this without losing the wonder of the deck: its unique nature as a physical object that players—not just their characters—can hold in their hands.

This book will show you how to tailor the deck for your game. This chapter presents a history of the deck throughout each edition of Dungeons & Dragons, then outlines the other chapters of this book, which are grouped by theme: DM options, character creation options, astrology-themed options, adventure locations, and finally adversaries and rivals.

The Deck in D&D

The *Deck of Many Things* is as old as D&D, but it's had many variations over almost fifty years.

The deck first appeared in print in 1975, in the pages of *Greyhawk*, the first supplement for the Dungeons & Dragons game. This earliest version of the deck established mechanical effects associated with the various cards. The deck was assembled with the face cards, aces, and jokers from an ordinary deck of playing cards. There were only eighteen cards in the deck, and none of them had names. But from the beginning, the deck was intended to be represented by a physical object players could hold.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

With the publication of the first *Dungeon Master's Guide* in 1979, the most recognizable aspects of the *Deck of Many Things* were established. Here, the names of the cards first appeared, and the deck was expanded to twenty-two cards. These changes signaled the deck's transition from something inspired by playing cards to one inspired by the tarot; a traditional tarot deck also has twenty-two named cards known as the major arcana. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* also introduced the idea that there was more than one version of the deck; there was also a more common and less powerful version with only thirteen cards.

Dragon and Dungeon Magazines

A different version of the deck appeared in 1983 in the pages of *Dragon* 77. "The Tarot Deck of Many Things," written by Michael Lowry, reimagined the deck as a new magic item. The *Tarot Deck of Many Things* was a unique artifact created by "the most powerful god of fate in the universe." It could be used to answer questions and reveal the future in the way of traditional tarot, and each of its seventy-eight cards had a unique effect when drawn.

In 1989, the *Deck of Many Things* expanded again. "Luck of the Draw" in *Dragon* 148 explored the deck through a conversation between a pompous wizard named Basil and his mercenary agent, a warrior named Jared. In this story, author Robin Jenkins offered answers for some of the deck's most enigmatic questions: who made the deck, and why? Jenkins, through Jared, suggested the deck—or, more properly, decks, since the cards were rare but not unique—were created by gods of luck dwelling on the plane of Concordant Opposition (known now as the Outlands) to test the greed of hapless adventurers. The cards were distributed throughout the world by leprechauns, who were familiar with such tests as custodians of the pots of gold at the ends of rainbows. Jenkins's expansion of the deck was unofficial, but it was illuminating, since the *Dungeon Master's Guide* detailed how the deck worked but didn't explain what the deck was or how it came to exist. Those questions were left for individual Dungeon Masters to figure out—or simply leave unanswered.

That same issue of *Dragon* also included the first physical replica of the deck, illustrated by George Barr and printed on card stock in the center of the magazine. At last, when characters found the *Deck of Many Things* in a treasure hoard, the DM could offer them a physical deck to draw from. Barr also detailed the backs of the cards for the first time. No design on the backs of the cards had ever been mentioned before, but here it gained a pair of dragons—one white, one black—embodying the deck's equal balance of positive and negative cards.

Around the same time, the adventure "House of Cards" appeared in *Dungeon* 19. This adventure by Randy Maxwell began as an urban sandbox with the characters investigating a thieves' guild. The guild's headquarters concealed a temple to Mask, the god of thieves in the Forgotten Realms, and the doors to the complex were insidiously trapped. Each of the twenty-two doors had one card from the *Deck of Many Things* built into it, so the door couldn't be opened without drawing the card. Moreover, the entire complex had been bolstered against an array of methods the characters might have taken to avoid interacting with the cards. To explore the dungeon, the characters had to draw every single card from the deck. This quickly became a resource-management puzzle: when the players knew one of their number would be imprisoned by the Donjon card, for example, or have their soul separated from their body by the Void card, how did they proceed?

Third Edition

When D&D was reimagined in its third edition, the new *Dungeon Master's Guide* included the *Deck of Many Things*. The mechanical effects of the cards and the card names remained largely unchanged from the first and second edition versions, but there were two important differences. Tarot cards had become much more familiar to players and were easier to find, so DMs were instructed how to build a *Deck of Many Things* from tarot cards in addition to playing cards. More importantly, the deck became a minor artifact, formally representing key features of the deck from previous editions: it was a magic item that characters couldn't create on their own.

Fourth Edition

Two versions of the deck were presented for the fourth edition of D&D. The first appeared in *Dungeon* 177 and was an artifact intended for heroes of levels 11–20; the second appeared a year later in the boxed adventure *Madness at Gardmore Abbey* (2011) and was aimed at levels 1–10.

But in the fourth edition of D&D, artifacts were more than just magic items that couldn't be duplicated; they had minds of their own and pursued secret purposes. The deck sought to sow chaos and topple powerful leaders regardless of whether they were good or evil. Characters who helped the deck pursue these goals were rewarded with favorable cards, while those who thwarted the deck were forced to draw multiple cards and keep the worst.

A new origin for the deck was put forward but not confirmed in *Madness at Gardmore Abbey*: the deck was a gift from an archfey to a mighty emperor. As

the archfey predicted, the emperor was unable to resist using the deck to cast his own future, and the deck shattered his empire. The deck also gained magical powers distinct from the cards' effects: wizards, sorcerers, and warlocks could use the deck to empower their spells.

The *Deck of Many Things* was central to *Madness at Gardmore Abbey*. Cards were scattered throughout the adventure, and the characters were charged with collecting them. Each card had unique powers, so characters could enjoy using the cards before the deck was fully assembled. But there was also a random factor inspired by the use of tarokka cards in the classic adventure *Ravenloft*. The DM could draw cards from the deck to determine the identity of their patron, the location of each card, and the scene of the adventure's denouement. To facilitate this, the adventure included another re-creation of the deck, with art by William O'Connor. (O'Connor's designs also appeared when MAGIC: THE GATHERING drew on the *Deck of Many Things* for a set inspired by the Forgotten Realms.) Like "House of Cards," *Madness at Gardmore Abbey* forced characters to interact with the *Deck of Many Things*, but it rewarded them with new powers instead of punishing them and blocking all efforts to escape the deck.

Fifth Edition

The *Deck of Many Things* was revised yet again in 2014 for the fifth edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*. O'Connor's art remained, and the thirteen-card version of the deck returned, but the deck was no longer an artifact and no longer sentient. This was the latest version of the deck in D&D—until now.

The Book of Many Things explores and expands the deck. It isn't intelligent, but the original deck created by Istus for Asteria and Euryale is so powerful that it has countless lesser reflections throughout the multiverse, including versions with more, fewer, or different cards.

The deck has been in every edition of D&D, but there is no single "best" version of the deck. It has always been changing, and it always will. When you include the deck in your game, tailor it to your table so it does exactly what you want and need it to. That's what D&D has always done.

Changes to the Deck

Two of the cards in the traditional *Deck of Many Things* have been renamed for this book. This doesn't change the game effects of these cards.

Idiot. This card has been renamed Puzzle, inspiring the puzzles, riddles, and traps found in chapter 4.

Vizier. This card has been renamed Sage, inspiring the character options, spells, and magic items in chapter 7.

Where to Go Next

Each card in the *Deck of Many Things* has inspired one chapter of this book. The chapters, in turn, cover five broad themes.

Dungeon Master Toolbox

The first five chapters provide tools for DMs:

Chapter 1: Fool. This chapter includes a history of the deck in D&D—illustrating both the deck's importance and its ever-changing nature—and a summary of the book's contents.

Chapter 2: Key. This vital chapter advises you on introducing the deck and using it in a campaign without breaking your game!

Chapter 3: Balance. Cards, including *The Deck of Many Things* card set, can be used as a unique randomizer, generating nonplayer characters, personality traits, encounters, and more; this chapter shows you how.

Chapter 4: Puzzle. This chapter presents puzzles, riddles, and traps inspired by the deck as well as advice on how to use them in your campaign.

Chapter 5: Gem. The twenty-two new magic items in this chapter were each inspired by a card from the *Deck of Many Things*.

Character Creation Options

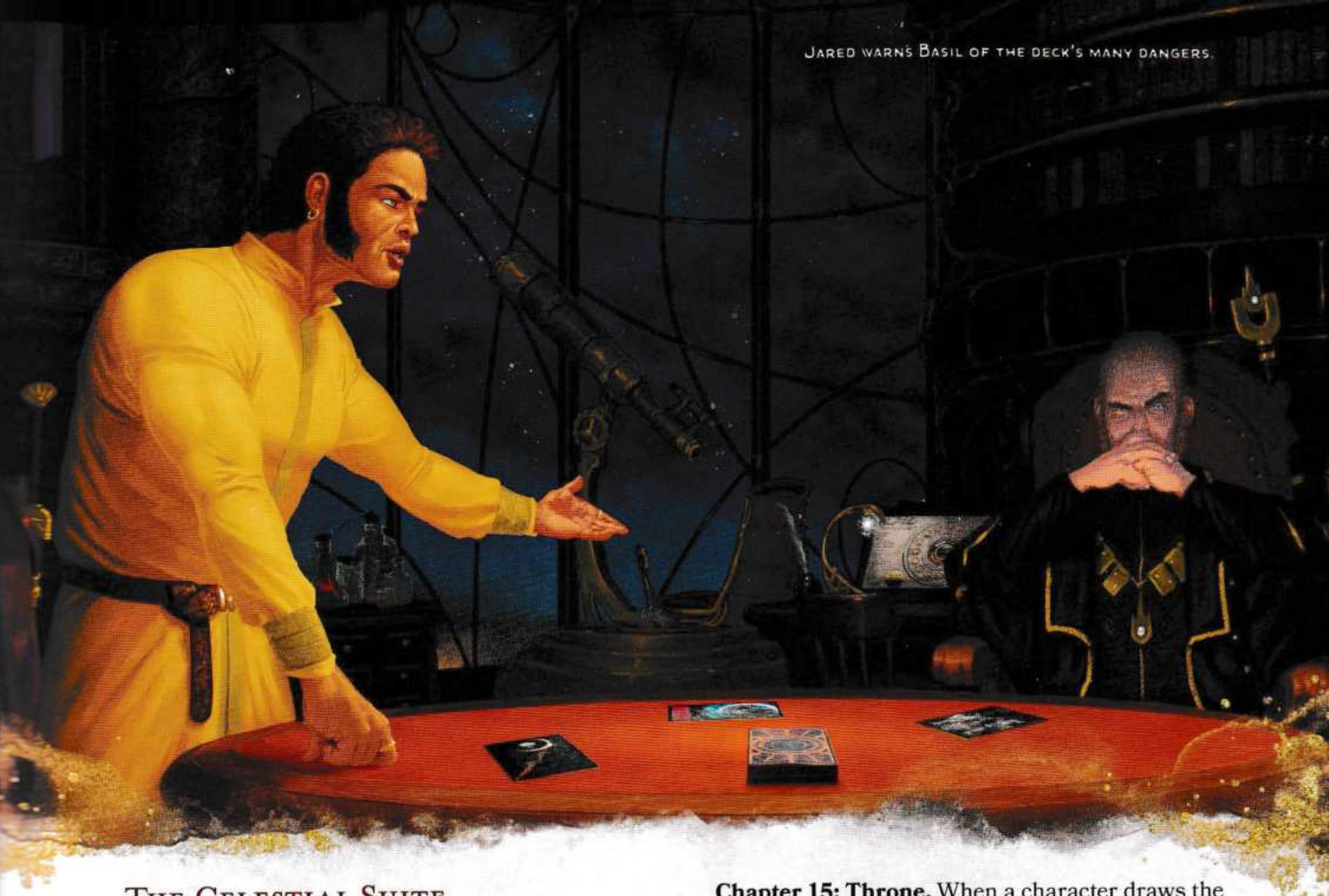
Next are four chapters of character-focused content:

Chapter 6: Rogue. This chapter provides advice and new magic items suited to bards, rangers, rogues, and other characters who prioritize their skills. The "Rogues' Gallery" section presents treacherous adversaries for when a player draws the Rogue card from the deck.

Chapter 7: Sage. This chapter focuses on sorcerers, warlocks, wizards, and other characters who wield arcane magic. It includes the new Cartomancer feat, new spells, and the *Deck of Many More Things*: the cards added to the *Deck of Many Things* over the centuries by mortal spellcasters.

Chapter 8: Fates. New backgrounds in this chapter describe characters whose lives have been transformed by the *Deck of Many Things* or a similar effect. This chapter also includes character creation advice and magic items appropriate for clerics, druids, paladins, and other characters with a connection to the divine.

Chapter 9: Knight. Characters who draw the Knight card gain the service of an ally; this chapter describes a new creature that answers that call. DMs can also find advice on integrating allies into an adventuring party. In addition, the chapter includes character creation advice and new magic items for barbarians, fighters, monks, and other combat specialists.



Jared warns Basil of the deck's many dangers.

The Celestial Suite

These four chapters are inspired by astrological phenomena:

Chapter 10: Sun. This chapter describes knights of the Solar Bastion, who monitor the deck and protect innocent people from its dangers.

Chapter 11: Moon. A ruthless thieves' guild called the Moonstalkers strikes from a hidden lair, but its leaders hide a terrible secret.

Chapter 12: Comet. A destructive comet called the All-Consuming Star travels on a wandering course through the multiverse. In its wake, it has spawned an apocalyptic cult bent on bringing an end to all space and time.

Chapter 13: Star. This chapter details the Sky of Many Things, a zodiac of twelve constellations that creates magical effects in the world as each constellation rises and falls.

Adventure Locations

The next five chapters include adventure locations:

Chapter 14: Jester. A magical marketplace called the Seelie Market is carried through the sky by a moonstone dragon. Among its many vendors is a nilbog fortune teller who will read a character's future using his *Deck of Many Things* or let the character draw from it—for a price.

Chapter 15: Throne. When a character draws the Throne card, they gain ownership of a small keep; this is that keep, but it's not empty!

Chapter 16: Ruin. Gardmore Abbey has collapsed into ruin, but its ancient towers and underground catacombs aren't entirely abandoned. At the summit lairs Mekkalath the dragon, and a *Deck of Many Things* waits in his hoard.

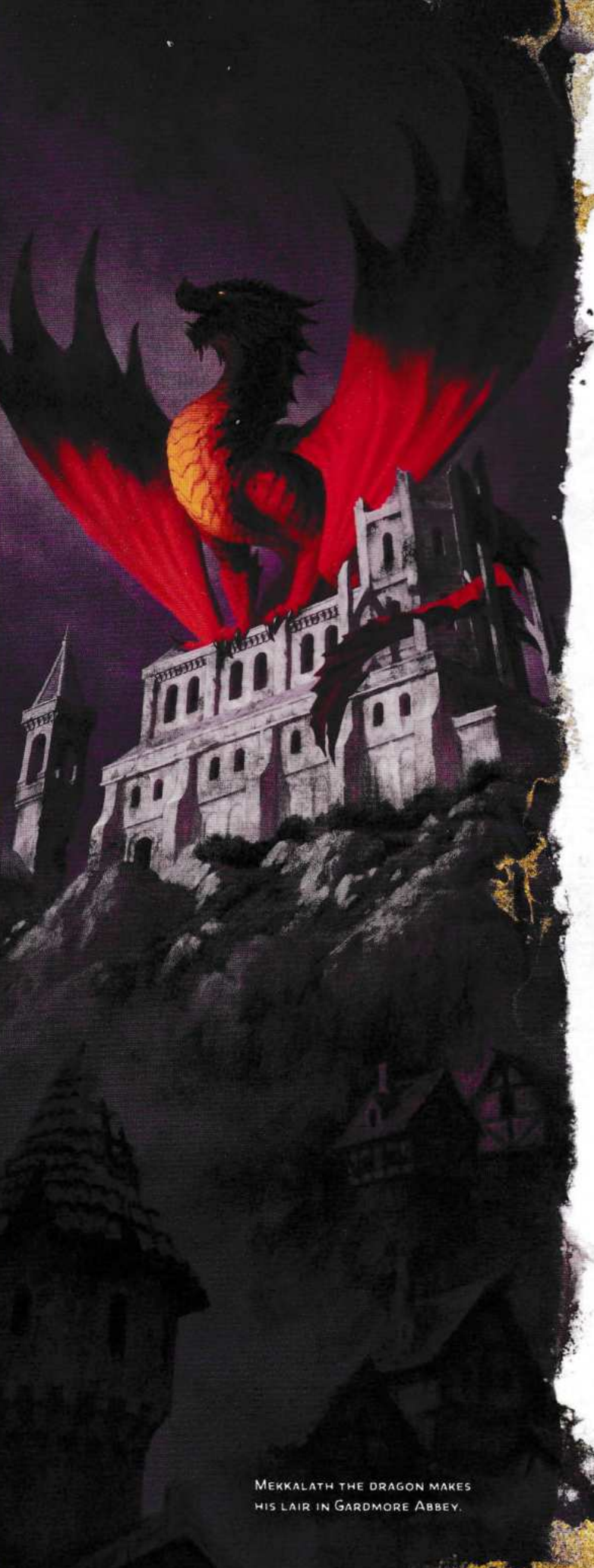
Chapter 17: Donjon. Victims of the Donjon card are imprisoned in an extradimensional sphere, their location all but impossible to discover. This chapter details that massive techno-magical prison, which is collapsing slowly into ruin.

Chapter 18: Void. Victims of the Void card have their souls whisked away to an unknown location, leaving their helpless bodies behind. This chapter reveals where their souls go and provides DMs with advice on handling sessions where a player might not be able to play their own character.

Adversaries and Rivals

The final four chapters present new monsters and the two people responsible for the deck's creation:

Chapter 19: Skull. Drawing the Skull card summons an avatar of death, and those it slays are cursed with undeath for as long as the deck exists. Over centuries, those undead have banded together to find and destroy all *Decks of Many Things*.



MEKKALATH THE DRAGON MAKES HIS LAIR IN GARDMORE ABBEY.

Chapter 20: Flames. This chapter describes unique Fiends that can serve as antagonists in your campaign, even if no one in your game has drawn the Flames card to earn a devil's enmity.

Chapter 21: Talons. This chapter includes new monsters inspired or created by the deck.

Chapter 22: Euryale. The deck was created for Asteria, a human warrior, and her sister-in-arms, the medusa Euryale. Both still live, and they know more about the deck than anyone. This chapter chronicles their story.

Using This Book

To use this book, you'll need the fifth edition core rulebooks (*Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*).

The adventure locations detailed in this book embrace the unpredictable nature of the *Deck of Many Things*. Most don't have a predetermined path for adventurers to take and aren't directed at characters of a particular level. Instead, they have multiple branching paths and a broad range of challenges. Some of the monsters encountered in a location might not be powerful enough to physically challenge the heroes, while other threats might be so dangerous that adventurers must retreat and gain 1 or more levels on some other quest before returning. If you use one of these adventure locations or campaign elements, make it your own. Change it to fit the unique expectations of your players, the requirements of your table, and your own taste.

> Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a specific circumstance as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block. Most of the monsters mentioned in this book appear in the *Monster Manual*, but *The Book of Many Things* introduces many new monsters; a complete list appears in chapter 21. Sometimes a monster mentioned in this book includes a suggestion for an alternative chosen from *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*, which you can use instead if you have that book.

If a stat block appears in this book or *Monsters of the Multiverse*, the text where the monster is introduced tells you so. Likewise, spells mentioned in this book are described in the *Player's Handbook*, and magic items are described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* unless the text directs you to another chapter in this book.

ROBSON MICHEL

CHAPTER 2

KEY

A *Deck of Many Things* is a complex magic item, and introducing one to your game can be challenging. This chapter addresses numerous topics especially important to the Dungeon Master:

- The origin and nature of the deck
- Using a deck without disrupting your campaign (more than you want to)
- Building a deck that contains only specific cards
- Integrating a deck's effects into your campaign
- How characters handle and use a deck in play
- New magical effects associated with each card
- Adventure seeds for characters who want to create their own cards

A Deck of Many Stories

The story of the *Deck of Many Things* began when a human woman named Asteria bargained with Istus, a god of fate, to save the life of Euryale, her dearest friend. As part of this bargain, Istus created a deck of twenty-two magical cards drawn from constellations in the night sky, and she used thirteen of these cards to change the destinies of Asteria and Euryale. These cards formed the first *Deck of Many Things*, an artifact with vast and unpredictable powers (the deck's origin is explored further in chapter 22).

Thanks to the deck's divine origin and unusual nature, it soon manifested in myriad lesser forms throughout the multiverse. Some of these wondrous items had fewer cards—typically only the thirteen cards used in Istus's reading for Asteria. Occasionally a deck manifested as something else entirely: a circle of twenty-two doorways, or a die with twenty-two sides, each roll of which had the power to change an individual's destiny.

Soon those inspired by the deck sought to create their own magical cards. Most of these efforts resulted in entirely new magic items, such as the *Deck of Miscellany* (see chapter 6) or the *Deck of Wonder* (see chapter 7). But occasionally, a legendary mage or a priest dedicated to the gods of fate and destiny succeeded in creating a new card that appeared alongside the *Deck of Many Things*, and that card replicated throughout the multiverse; these new cards make up the *Deck of Many More Things*, detailed in chapter 7.

Decks of Many Things have claimed many lives. Those who draw the Skull must fight an avatar of death, and those slain by this avatar rise again as Undead, doomed to exist as long as the decks do. Over the centuries, these Undead gathered to form the Grim Harrow, a horde of merciless hunters traveling the multiverse on a quest to find and destroy every manifestation of the deck so they can end their doomed existence (see chapter 19 for more on these beings). To combat these dangers, an angel founded the Solar Bastion (see chapter 10), a benevolent organization dedicated to protecting innocent people from the decks and the many dangers they pose.

The Grim Harrow and the Solar Bastion have learned much about the original deck over the centuries, but no one knows more about it than Asteria herself, who still travels the multiverse living out the destiny foretold for her by Istus long ago.

Istus creates the first *Deck of Many Things.*

But in your campaign, the deck might have a different story. Perhaps the *Deck of Many Things* already existed when Istus used it to read Asteria's future, and it has another origin entirely. Perhaps it was the creation of a powerful faerie trickster or made by gods of chance as a test for greedy mortals. Use the story that best suits your campaign.

Preparing to Use the Deck

The power and unpredictability of a *Deck of Many Things* gives it the potential to wildly alter the course of campaigns. In an instant, characters could inherit a keep, shifting the campaign's focus to its defense and maintenance; a character could become separated from the rest of the party, trapped in an undetectable and unreachable prison; or characters could instantly perish. While some groups embrace such surprising twists, others prefer to avoid major campaign upsets.

This book provides tools to help you use the deck on your own terms. The following sections detail two ways to head off potential complications before the characters draw their first card. "Customizing Your Deck" suggests strategies for stacking the deck with only cards that will be fun for your group. Meanwhile, "The Deck as Narrative" discusses having cards foreshadow future events, rather than triggering instantaneous effects, so you can incorporate the effects into your campaign when the time is right.

The rest of this book also contains a wealth of advice and tools that address the challenges posed by specific cards. For example, the keep described in chapter 15 is perfect for any character who draws the Throne card. The three powerful fiends found in chapter 20 make ideal enemies for those who draw the Flames card. Chapter 18 includes a full map of the Void's prison, as well as suggestions for working with players whose characters are imprisoned there. With these resources in hand, you'll be free to enjoy where the cards lead your characters.

Customizing Your Deck

The easiest way to ensure the *Deck of Many Things* doesn't radically alter your campaign is to limit the cards you include, selecting cards appropriate for the characters' level or that support the campaign's theme. The number and effects of the cards provided in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are suggestions you can change as necessary. The deck has had many variations over D&D's history, so when you change it, you're in good company!

Here are examples of customized decks that reinforce a campaign's tone, appeal to particular kinds of players, or avoid specific dangers:

Starter Deck. This version of the *Deck of Many Things* is meant for low-level characters, potentially as low as 1st level: Comet, Fates, Fool, Key, Knight, Rogue, Ruin, Sage, Talons.

Roleplaying Focus. Players who enjoy intense roleplaying and interacting with nonplayer characters will get the most from this deck: Balance, Fates, Flames, Knight, Rogue, Ruin, Sage, Throne.

Lighthearted. Most of the cards in this deck bestow benefits on those who draw them, and the few exceptions are relatively easily recovered from: Comet, Fates, Fool, Gem, Jester, Key, Knight, Moon, Ruin, Sage, Star, Sun, Throne.

Deck of Horrors. In this deck, perhaps found in Ravenloft or similar settings, harmful cards far outnumber helpful ones: Balance, Comet, Donjon, Euryale, Flames, Fool, Jester, Puzzle, Rogue, Ruin, Skull, Talons, Void.

You can supplement these decks with cards from the *Deck of Many More Things*, detailed in chapter 7.

The Deck as Narrative

Traditionally, the effects created by the *Deck of Many Things* are immediate. When a character draws the Knight card, a fighter immediately appears and offers their service, and a character who draws the Gem card might be literally showered with riches. While this suits some campaigns, you can take a more narrative approach to the deck by having cards foreshadow future events that occur at a time of your choosing. When you use the deck in this way, drawing from it is less like pulling the lever on a cosmic slot machine and more like allowing a character to select a new story for themself without being allowed to know that story ahead of time.

With this narrative approach to the *Deck of Many Things*, you decide how to weave the events triggered by cards into your campaign. For example, a character who draws the Knight card might meet a warrior along the side of the road, in a tavern, or even trapped in a dangerous dungeon; by freeing the warrior, the character earns the warrior's loyalty. A character who draws the Gem card might find a rich store of jewels in their next treasure hoard, or they might inherit great wealth when a relative dies. Many of the chapters in this book include advice to help you work the effects of their cards into your campaign story.

Using the deck's effects as events in your campaign poses an interesting question: is the deck predicting those events or causing them? If a character draws the Flames card, and soon after, minions of Aurnozci (see chapter 20) try to capture them, is this a direct result of drawing the card, or would the demons have attacked them anyway? *The Book of*

Many Things doesn't answer this question; the answer is up to you and your players.

When you take a narrative approach to the *Deck of Many Things*, don't put off card effects for too long. It's okay for players to wonder for a session or two exactly when and how the effects will manifest, and you can use that time to devise clever and memorable ways to interpret the effects and keep the players in suspense. For example, a beloved ally might come to hate a character who draws the Rogue card, and that ally might conceal their hatred for several sessions before revealing it in a moment of sudden treachery. But new stories soon crowd out the old, and players might not be impressed if a card takes too long to manifest.

Introducing the Deck

This book provides several ways to introduce the *Deck of Many Things* to your campaign, depending on the interests of your players and the kind of story you want to tell.

The mysterious faerie market described in chapter 14 is home to a nilbog fortune teller named Oddlewin who uses a *Deck of Many Things* to read the future of his customers. This might be the first time that characters see the deck, and if they're willing to perform a service for Oddlewin, he might let them draw from it. This is a good way to introduce the deck to low-level characters.

Heroes of a more adventurous bent might explore the ruins of Gardmore Abbey presented in chapter 16. The abbey has long been associated with the deck, since an ill-fated draw caused a massacre of both the knights who defended the site and the army that besieged them. Now the ruins are home to Mekkalath, a red dragon, and a *Deck of Many Things* lies in his hoard. Few adventurers are powerful enough to challenge Mekkalath directly, but where might is insufficient, guile and cunning can prevail.

Hello there! I've snuck some notes throughout this book—it felt appropriate, given my experience with this wondrous deck. May my words provide you with insight and inspiration!

-Asteria

Finally, the characters might simply be given a deck by someone who wants them to have it. Rifflers, mischievous fey presented in chapter 21, are obsessed with the decks and constantly move them through the multiverse in a vain effort to manipulate destiny and complete a master plan only they understand. Alternatively, Asteria or Euryale, detailed in chapter 22, might give a deck to characters desperate to change their destiny.

The Deck in Play

This section clarifies many things about how individuals can use and handle a *Deck of Many Things* without triggering its fantastic powers. New magical abilities for each card are also provided, allowing characters who find only a few cards to engage with this magic item in their adventures.

You'll also find guidelines for characters who want to create new cards for the deck's complement, the *Deck of Many More Things*.

Handling the Cards

The *Deck of Many Things* has the power to transform anyone who draws from it, but to trigger its effects, the individual handling the cards must state their desire to draw from it, as well as the number of cards they intend to draw. Otherwise, the deck's magical powers lie dormant. Anyone who identifies a deck learns this about the deck in the process, per the rules for identifying magic items.

This means that under normal circumstances, characters can handle a *Deck of Many Things* safely. A character who finds a deck can look at it, spread the cards out, and otherwise manipulate the cards without triggering their effects. This is why folk are able to use decks as divinatory tools, placing cards before themselves to gain insight into the future or personal dilemmas without triggering the cards' effects.

But accidents do happen. A curious stranger who spots a deck, face down, might reach out to draw the topmost card without realizing the import of their actions, spurring an adventure that draws the characters' attention. While the decks aren't sapient and have no thoughts or goals of their own, many people report feeling a compulsion to draw from decks whenever they are near.

Effects for Single Cards

A *Deck of Many Things* typically appears not as individual cards, but as a collection of cards characters can draw from. But this doesn't have to be true; you can give each card a property as a standalone item, so characters who find only one card can still enjoy this famed item and use the card on adventures.

This approach is particularly useful if you make a *Deck of Many Things* the object of a quest; as the characters explore, each card they find grants them a magical ability they can use in subsequent adventures to find the cards that remain. Eventually the heroes assemble the entire deck, which they can then use in the traditional manner, drawing transformative cards from it in a fitting climax to the campaign.

You can grant the following additional magical properties to the cards of the *Deck of Many Things*:

Balance. As an action, you can brandish this card at one creature you can see within 30 feet of yourself and drain its life force. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or take 4d8 necrotic damage. You then regain a number of hit points equal to the necrotic damage the target takes. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Comet. As an action, you can hold this card aloft and call down a fiery meteor to a point you can see within 120 feet of yourself. Each creature within a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage and 6d6 fire damage, or half as much damage on a successful save. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Donjon. As an action, you can brandish this card at one creature you can see within 30 feet of yourself. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw, or it vanishes, transported to a prison on another plane of existence. After 1 minute, the target reappears in the space it left or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Euryale. As an action, you can brandish this card at one creature you can see within 30 feet of yourself and attempt to turn it to stone. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, or it begins to turn to stone and has the restrained condition. The affected target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a successful save, the effect ends on the target. On a failed save, the target has the petrified condition (instead of the restrained condition) until it is removed by the *Greater Restoration* spell or similar magic. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Fates. As a bonus action, you can brandish this card at one willing creature you can see within 30 feet of yourself, granting the creature a brief glimpse of the future. Until the start of your next turn, the creature has advantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. Additionally, other creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against the target for the duration. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

THE DECK HAS REPLICATED THROUGHOUT THE MULTIVERSE IN INFINITE COMBINATIONS.

Flames. You can use this card to summon a devil. The card is attuned to a specific devil with a challenge rating of 8 or lower. As an action, you can hold this card aloft and summon that devil, which appears in an unoccupied space you can see within 30 feet of you. The devil is initially unfriendly toward you and your companions. Roll initiative for the devil, which has its own turns. The DM has the creature's stat block. On each of your turns, you can issue a verbal command to the devil (no action required by you), and as long as you are holding this card, the devil obeys your commands. Otherwise, it is under the DM's control and acts according to its nature—it might attack you if it thinks it can prevail or try to tempt you to undertake an evil act in exchange for further service. After 1 minute or when the devil's hit points drop to 0, the devil returns to the Lower Planes. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Fool. As an action, you can brandish this card at one creature you can see within 30 feet of yourself. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, or for the next minute, the target

The Knights of the Solar Bastion battle the Grim Harrow whenever the two groups meet.

can't cast spells or activate magic items, it has disadvantage on all saving throws, and other creatures have resistance to all damage it deals. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Gem. This card holds one 6th-level spell (chosen by the DM). As an action, you can brandish this card and use it to cast the spell stored inside (spell attack bonus +9, save DC 17). Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Jester. As an action, you can brandish this card and use it to cast the *Otto's Irresistible Dance* spell (save DC 17), and you have advantage on Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration on it. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Key. As an action, you can brandish this card and use it to cast the *Knock* spell, with no sound made by the spell. This property can be used five times, and it regains all expended uses at dawn.

Knight. As an action, you can throw this card to an unoccupied space on the ground within 60 feet of yourself while speaking a command word, whereupon the card magically transforms into a **deck defender** (see chapter 9 for its stat block) for up to 1 minute or until you use an action to speak the command word again, whereupon it transforms back into a card. The deck defender obeys your spoken commands. If you issue no commands, it takes the Dodge action and moves to avoid danger. The deck defender reverts to a card early if it drops to 0 hit points. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Moon. As an action, you can speak a command word while touching this card and transform into a wolflike biped for 1 minute. For that duration, you have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage, and when you hit a target with a weapon or an unarmed strike, the target takes an extra 1d6 force damage. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Puzzle. As an action, you can hold this card aloft and magically disable each trap within 60 feet of you that isn't behind total cover. A trap, for the purpose of this property, includes any object or mechanism that would inflict a sudden effect that was intended by its maker to cause harm or inconvenience. If the trap is the effect of a spell, such as *Alarm*, that trap is suppressed for 10 minutes instead of being disabled. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Rogue. When you hit a target with a weapon attack while holding this card, you can deal an extra 6d6 force damage to that target. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Ruin. As an action, you can brandish this card and use it to cast the *Disintegrate* spell (save DC 17). Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Sage. As an action, you can brandish this card and use it to cast the *Contact Other Plane* spell. When you cast the spell in this way, your questions are answered by the mysterious figure depicted on the card. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Skull. As an action, you can brandish this card and use it to cast *Spirit of Death* (see chapter 7) as a 6th-level spell (spell attack bonus +9, save DC 17). Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Star. As a bonus action, you can speak a command word while holding this card aloft to gain advantage on all saving throws you make for the next 10 minutes. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Sun. As an action, you can brandish this card and use it to cast the *Sunbeam* spell (save DC 17), projecting the light from the card's face. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Talons. As an action, you can brandish this card and target one magic item you can see within 120 feet of yourself. If the item isn't an artifact, its magical properties are suppressed for 1 minute. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Throne. As an action, you can speak a command word while holding this card to gain advantage on Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) checks for 1 minute. In addition, for that duration, you can use this card to cast the *Command* spell (save DC 17) as an action. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Void. As an action, you can brandish this card and attempt to banish up to three creatures you can see within 120 feet of yourself. If the target is from a different plane of existence than the plane you're on, the target must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or be banished, returning to that other plane. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Adding to the Deck

Over many centuries, a few dozen individuals have managed to create their own unique cards, expanding the deck. These cards, known as the *Deck of Many More Things*, can manifest throughout the multiverse alongside the twenty-two original cards, and the magical powers of the *Deck of Many More Things* are detailed in chapter 7. Characters can't craft a *Deck of Many Things*, but in your game, they might be able to craft a new card for the *Deck of Many More Things*.

Anyone trying to make a card for the *Deck of Many More Things* must be at least 17th level. No formula for these cards exists, so the character must invent their own. While inventing the formula for such a potent magic item should take a long time, even years, a character can work on this project between or even on adventures. Characters might research their new formula by traveling to lost sites of ancient lore or locating others who have created cards of their own to learn how they accomplished this.

Once a character has invented the formula, they must acquire the magical ingredients—typically found only at great personal risk. Potential ingredients include magical inks made from crushed gemstones or the blood of legendary creatures, magical brushes or quills, and magical paper or other materials onto which the card must be painted (such as a dragon scale or a piece of the tarrasque's carapace). Great artistic skill is also required, so the creator might need to find a qualified artist or master the needed techniques themself. Furthermore, the magical ritual that creates the card must be performed at a specific time, perhaps when a particular constellation is in the sky. Divine intervention from a god of fate or destiny might be required.

While a character might be driven to create a new card as a matter of personal pride or a testament to the individual's magical prowess, consider rewarding a character who achieves this mighty goal with a benefit like one or more of the following:

Demiplane. Creating a card for the *Deck of Many More Things* simultaneously creates a demiplane inspired by the new card. The card's creator has complete control over this demiplane and can make it their permanent home.

Exclusive Membership. Card creators are powerful masters of magic who form a secret cabal. Once a year, they gather at a predetermined site to socialize, scheme, and decide the future of the multiverse.

Immortality. A character who adds a card to the *Deck of Many More Things* stops aging and can't die of old age until their card or the *Deck of Many More Things* to which it belongs is destroyed; then all their missing years suddenly catch up to them (probably killing them instantly).

World Walking. Adding a card to the deck allows the creator to travel to any world where their card has manifested as part of a *Deck of Many More Things*.

CHAPTER 3

BALANCE

DICE ARE A RELIABLE WAY TO RANDOMIZE a variety of gameplay elements. Throughout its history, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS has relied on dice to do everything from creating encounters with wandering monsters to inspiring whole adventures. But *The Deck of Many Things* card set and other card decks provide an alternative way to get random results. How is drawing from a deck of cards different from rolling dice? And how can Dungeon Masters make interesting use of those differences?

This chapter addresses some of the unique randomizing elements cards can provide, even for a game that already has iconic random number generators close at hand.

ADVANTAGES OF USING CARDS

Whether you're using *The Deck of Many Things* card set, oracle cards like tarokka cards or tarot cards, or a deck of playing cards, you can do things with cards that would be difficult or even impossible to do using dice:

Archetypes and Imagery. When interpreting *The Deck of Many Things* card set and oracle cards, you can lean on the cards' imagery, not just numbers and words. A card's artwork can generate meaning for that card beyond whatever this book or any other text might tell you it means. Cards from MAGIC: THE GATHERING also work well for inspiration since they feature amazing fantasy art in addition to symbols. Ordinary playing cards' suits, one-eyed jacks, and other markings can be assigned additional meanings.

Choose from a Hand. Many card games rely on dealing hands of cards. You can use hands to represent a limited set of options in a situation, such as possible leads to pursue or actions to take. This is a fun way to offer players choices without overwhelming them with too many options.

Customizable Results. Drawing from a deck of cards is equivalent to rolling on a table of possible results. But when using cards, it's easy to prevent any undesired results: simply leave those cards out of the deck.

Eliminate Repetition. You can prevent repetition in a deck by removing cards once they've been drawn.

Position and Orientation. You can assign meaning to a card's position or orientation in addition to its numeric or symbolic value. For example, in a tarot card spread, each card's intrinsic meaning changes depending on whether that card is upright or reversed (top oriented downward), or where it lies in relation to other cards in a spread.

Stacked Deck. You can ensure certain outcomes by stacking the deck with cards placed in a specific order. If you have duplicates of your cards, you can use multiple copies to make a given card more likely to be drawn.

You can use Magic: The Gathering cards to build idea decks for creatures, items, people, or situations.

Unusual Numbers. Using cards instead of dice allows you to choose from a set number of options that doesn't correspond to the number of sides on a typical die or combination of dice, such as odd numbers of options.

The rest of this chapter is devoted to examples of how you can use these properties of cards to enrich your D&D game. If you're interested in further possibilities, the reference book that accompanies *The Deck of Many Things* card set also presents a method for using the deck to generate adventures, as well as advice on using them for in-game fortune-telling.

Card Sparks

You can use the visual elements of cards as a quick source of inspiration. Here are three methods to spark your imagination.

Quick Nonplayer Characters

When you need to create a nonplayer character, draw a card and let it inspire distinctive features of the NPC. For example, if the card depicts a person, the NPC might resemble that person. If the card features symbols, perhaps the NPC's clothing or jewelry incorporates those symbols. If the card has a divinatory meaning, that meaning could inform the NPC's name, personality, or goals.

Idea Decks

Consider building multiple custom decks to keep on hand for quick inspiration. Depending on the cards you have available, you might build decks of specific characters, creatures, events, spells, treasures, or anything else you need.

Filler Scenes

Use cards to fill in the narrative of your game. For example, you might ask each player to draw a card at the beginning of the session; then, you or the player (or both of you working together) can use those cards as brainstorming material, setting the scene at the start of the session or describing an event that occurred during a period of downtime

What Do the Cards Mean?

The "Card Sparks" and "Journey Spread" sections ask you to interpret cards based on their assigned meaning. The reference book that accompanies *The Deck of Many Things* describes meanings for those cards, and the *Curse of Strahd* adventure summarizes the meanings of tarokka cards. Various books and websites explain the meanings of tarot cards.

between adventures. Alternatively, you can draw cards during the session to help you generate story beats during an ongoing adventure.

Inspiration Hand

You can use *The Deck of Many Things* card set (or an equivalent deck built from twenty-two playing cards) to give players alternative ways to use inspiration.

Draw a number of cards equal to the number of players and place the cards face up on the table where everyone can see them. Whenever a player gains inspiration, they must pick a card and later use the effect shown on the Inspiration Cards table at the appropriate time. The player then draws a new card for the communal hand and shuffles the used card into the deck.

Inspiration Cards

Card	Effect
Balance (or 2 ♠)	When you deal damage to a creature, immediately spend 1 Hit Die to heal yourself. Roll the die, add your Constitution modifier, and regain a number of hit points equal to the total (minimum 1).
Comet (or 2 ♦)	As a bonus action, select one creature as your chosen foe. That creature has vulnerability to damage you deal and resistance to all other damage, and it has disadvantage on its attack rolls against any creature other than you. This effect ends when any creature other than you deals damage to the target.
Donjon (or A ♠)	As an action, you are transported to an empty demiplane until the end of your next turn. You can't affect or be affected by anything on the plane you left until you return. You return to the same space you left or, if that space is occupied, to the nearest unoccupied space.
Euryale (or Q ♠)	When a creature makes a saving throw, it has disadvantage on that saving throw.
Fates (or A ♥)	Reroll a single d20 roll you've just made. You must use the second roll.
Flames (or Q ♣)	When you deal damage to a creature, that creature takes an extra 1d6 fire damage.
Fool (or Joker with ™)	As a reaction, when you take damage, you cause the creature that dealt it to have the prone condition.
Gem (or 2 ♥)	Take an additional action on your turn.
Jester (or Joker without ™)	Take the Disengage action as a bonus action.
Key (or Q ♥)	As a bonus action, teleport, with anything you are wearing or carrying, up to 30 feet to a space you can see.
Knight (or J ♥)	As a reaction, impose disadvantage on the attack roll of a creature you can see.
Moon (or Q ♦)	As a bonus action, regain one expended 1st-level spell slot or a single use of an ability that can be used a certain number of times per day.
Puzzle (or 2 ♣)	Gain advantage on a saving throw.
Rogue (or J ♠)	Gain advantage on an attack roll.
Ruin (or K ♠)	As a bonus action, impose disadvantage on all ability checks of a creature you can see until the end of its next turn.
Sage (or A ♦)	Take the Help or Search action as a bonus action.
Skull (or J ♣)	As an action, surround yourself with a shroud of death. Until the start of your next turn, any creature that ends its turn within 5 feet of you takes 1d6 necrotic damage.
Star (or J ♦)	Gain advantage on an ability check.
Sun (or K ♦)	As a reaction, when a creature makes a melee attack that hits you, that creature has the blinded condition until the end of your next turn.
Talons (or A ♣)	As a bonus action, reduce the speed of one creature within 5 feet of you to 0 until the start of your next turn.
Throne (or K ♥)	As a reaction, when you take damage, the creature that dealt the damage has the frightened condition until the end of its next turn. You are the source of its fear.
Void (or K ♣)	As a reaction, when you take damage, gain resistance to that damage until the start of your next turn.

Inspiration for the DM

Another way to use the inspiration deck is to make its effects available to monsters and villains. In this variant, each time a player expends inspiration, the DM also draws a card from the deck. Rather than adding it to the communal hand, you keep that card secret until you play it on behalf of one of the characters' opponents.

You can play your inspiration cards soon after drawing them or save them for use in major encounters. Note that saving your cards might make players more reluctant to use inspiration, worrying they need to conserve it for later encounters. Your players are likely to follow your example, so if you want them to use their inspiration cards freely, you should do so as well.

Journey Spread

The journey spread is a means of making long journeys more interesting. In this method, you place cards in a particular arrangement (a spread) and interpret them based on their meaning, position, and orientation. You can use *The Deck of Many Things* card set, tarokka cards, a tarot deck, or any other cards you can readily assign symbolic meanings to. This method works best for a journey you expect to last at least as many days as you have players.

You can improvise encounters, other challenges, and rewards based on cards as they're revealed, or you can build a small deck in advance with fewer cards, then prepare notes on possible encounters and rewards based on your chosen cards.

For each day of the journey, lay out two cards face down, one overlapping the other, to form a journey spread (see diagram 3.1). This gives everyone at the table a visual representation of the journey and the characters' progress toward their destination.

Top Card: The Challenge

At the beginning of each day of a journey, a player flips over the top card to determine what happens that day. (Players should take turns at this.) Use that card's imagery or symbolic meaning to inspire a choice or challenge the characters will face that day. The card could represent a site the characters come across on their journey, like a ruined tower or a fork in the road, or a situation the characters are asked to resolve. You decide the scope of the decision the characters must make. You can ask them to make a simple choice ("Do you want to take the path along the edge of the cliff or climb down the ravine to walk along the bottom?"), to make a single ability check (use the Typical DCs table in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), or to navigate their way through a small dungeon or an encounter (which might involve multiple ability checks or even combat). Let the character of the player who flipped the card be the focus of the day's events and make any required ability checks (though another character can help, at your discretion).

Whatever choice or challenge you decide the top card represents, the characters' success or failure while dealing with that situation determines how you read the bottom card.

Bottom Card: Reward or Ruin

Once the situation presented by the top card has been resolved, the player can flip over the bottom card. Then it's up to you to interpret that card as either a reward or a ruin based on how well the players resolved the day's top card. If you're using cards that have a different meaning when they're upright versus upside down, ignore the cards' orientation.

Rewards

When determining rewards, here are some effects to consider:

Friendly Aid. The characters encounter another traveler or a friendly local resident who offers them food, shelter, information, or other assistance. The card can inspire both the characteristics of the person they meet and the nature of the aid that person provides.

Ready Foraging. The characters have abundant food and water for this day and don't need to consume any of their rations. They eat well that night, and each character begins the next day with inspiration.

Reduced Travel Time. The characters find a shortcut that reduces the time needed to reach their destination by a day. Remove the last pair of cards from the spread.

Treasure. The characters find treasure inspired by the card as they overcome the day's challenges. If the card doesn't seem appropriate, use the treasure tables in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine the treasure instead.

Ruins

When determining ruins, the following effects are broadly appropriate:

Encounter. The characters' failure leads to a difficult combat encounter. Use the card to help you decide what kind of creature is encountered.

Exhaustion. The stress of overcoming the challenge exhausts the characters. Each character gains 2 levels of exhaustion.

Extra Travel Time. The characters' journey is extended by 1 day. Use the card, as well as the circumstances of the challenge, to narrate this setback: perhaps the characters became lost in the woods or encountered an obstacle blocking their path. Add two more cards to the spread.

Lost Gear. The characters lose their rations or are unable to forage for food and water. Alternatively, they might lose nonmagical equipment, such as a bedroll, a tent, or a pack animal.

Restless Night. The characters are unable to finish a long rest before resuming their travels the next day.

DIAGRAM 3.1: AN EXAMPLE OF THE JOURNEY SPREAD

JOURNEY SPREAD EXAMPLE

Here is an example of how you might interpret cards from *The Deck of Many Things* card set in a journey spread, with interpretations informed by the card descriptions in the reference book:

Day 1 Challenge: Sage (Upright). The Sage card suggests an opportunity to gain insight or advice. Perhaps the characters come to a promontory that allows them to see the surrounding terrain for many miles. Ask the character who flipped the card to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) check to choose the best path.

Day 1 Reward or Ruin: Comet. Comets are harbingers of doom. If the character succeeds on the Wisdom check and chooses the better path, the characters' travel time decreases by a day, but their path is lined with omens that foretell terrible events when they reach their destination. If the character fails the Wisdom check and picks the worse path, the characters are troubled by nightmares that portend a disastrous future, preventing them from finishing a long rest that night.

Day 2 Challenge: Jester (Reversed). When reversed, this card can represent misfortunes piling up in a way that might be humorous if it weren't so disastrous. Imagine the worst possible day of hiking through the wilderness, and describe the litany of horrors the characters face: biting insects and leeches, a sudden rainstorm making a river impassible, a broken backpack strap, lost or moldy rations, blistered feet, sunburn once the rain has cleared, and so on. For each hindrance you devise, have one character (starting with the character of the player who flipped the card, then rotating through the party) make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw.

Day 2 Reward or Ruin: Fool. If the characters succeed on the majority of these saving throws, they stumble across a treasure: a *Hat of Disguise* or a similar item used to fool or deceive. The reversed Fool card implies disappointment or lost innocence; if they fail most of the saving throws, they gain 2 levels of exhaustion.

Day 3 Challenge: Donjon (Upright). This card can describe literal or metaphorical imprisonment. Perhaps the characters happen upon an eccentric's zoo, where monstrous animals are held in cruel captivity. The characters might decide to avoid the place entirely. Or they could free the monsters—hopefully avoiding the hungry ones—and confront the zoo's enraged owner.

Day 3 Reward or Ruin: Gem. If the characters overcome the challenges of the menagerie, they discover valuable treasures there; if not, they must face one additional trap or monster that uses the appearance of treasure as bait, such as a mimic.

Encounter Deck

Using cards to generate random encounters is a dynamic alternative to rolling on encounter tables. You can customize an encounter deck and remove cards as you draw them so they don't repeat. You can also alter the encounter deck as characters explore an area, adding cards to the deck to reflect changing circumstances and weaving the encounters into a narrative.

The following system is derived from *Miniatures Handbook* (2003).

How It Works

Construct a deck of about twenty cards that each represent a creature (see the "Constructing Your Deck" section below). When an encounter occurs, shuffle the deck and draw a number of cards equal to the number of characters in the party. Use one or more of these cards to build the encounter, using the guidelines in the "Choosing Monsters" section below. When the encounter is over, discard the cards of any monsters that were killed, so they won't be drawn again.

Constructing Your Deck

An encounter deck consists primarily of cards representing monsters. You can use cards from *The Deck of Many Things* card set, oracle cards, playing cards, cards from Magic: The Gathering, or even index cards with your handwritten notes. Any kind of card works as long as each card can correlate with a specific monster. You can also add special cards for unusual events, as detailed below.

Choosing Monsters

Choose ten to fifteen monsters with challenge ratings ranging from about half the level of the characters to 2 higher than their level. Usually you should include only one of the most powerful monsters, and you can include multiple copies of weaker monsters so they're more likely to be encountered.

Groups. A group is a collection of creatures that might be encountered together. Identical creatures always form a group, but you can also form groups using other criteria. A group might be based on a shared creature type, such as Undead or Fiend, or might consist of creatures that often work together, such as gnolls and hyenas. Whenever you draw two or more creature cards of the same group for an encounter, those creatures work together against the party.

Not all creatures need to belong to groups. You can add as many unaffiliated creatures as you like to your encounter deck. Create groups depending on how you'd like the characters to encounter the creatures.

Multiples. You can also designate single cards to represent two, three, or four creatures instead of just one. This ensures weak creatures appear in numbers sufficient to challenge the party without being overrepresented in the deck.

Special Cards

You can include special cards in your encounter deck to add twists to encounters, such as surprise allies, additional adversaries, or goals the adventurers must accomplish. If you include special cards, a typical encounter deck of about twenty monster cards should also include three or four special cards.

Friend Card. A friend is a creature that helps the characters fight the other creatures in an encounter. The friend might be the sole survivor of another adventuring party, a solitary traveler or recluse, or a benevolent monster like a flumph or an angel. The friend might have information about the adventure location or the creatures that dwell there.

When you draw a friend, set it aside. Then draw two additional cards and determine which foes the characters will face. The friend appears in the encounter with the other creatures, fighting on the side of the characters; you can let the players determine what the friend does on each of its turns.

A friend's challenge rating should be 1 or 2 lower than the level of the characters.

> Flumphs are always friend-shaped.

Lurker Card. A lurker is a sneaky, wandering opportunist that attacks the adventurers while they're fighting other creatures.

When you draw a lurker card, set it aside and determine what foes the characters will face as normal. The lurker appears in the encounter separate from the other monsters, as far from the characters as reasonably possible and hiding if it can, attacking once the characters are distracted.

Lurkers might include Humanoid foes like bandits, as well as ambush predators such as violet fungi, ropers, and gargoyles.

Twin Card. Twin creatures only appear together, though they need not be the same kind of creature.

If you draw both twin cards when an encounter occurs, the twin creatures appear in the encounter. If you draw only one twin card, shuffle it back into the deck and form the encounter as normal.

A PAIR OF DISPLACER BEASTS IN A DARK FOREST HAS THE MAKINGS OF A MEMORABLE ENCOUNTER.

The twins could be a pair of displacer beasts or a fire giant with two pet hell hounds (with the two hell hounds represented by a single card). Because you're more likely to draw both twin cards when the encounter deck has thinned out, the twin encounter should make for a climactic battle. Each twin should have a challenge rating about equal to the characters' level.

"Draw Two" Card. When you draw this card, discard it and draw two more. Don't return this card to the deck. You can also include a "draw three" card or even a "draw four" card.

Noncombat Encounter Cards. You can add cards to represent creatures you don't expect the characters to fight, such as a peaceful stegosaurus, or scenes the characters might find, like a mysterious statue. When you draw one of these cards, decide whether to use it as the encounter or to build an encounter using the remaining cards.

Goal Cards. You can also include one or more cards in an encounter deck to represent goals for the characters as they explore a region. For example, a goal card might represent an ancient ruin the characters are seeking. When that card appears, the adventurers find the site. A goal card could also represent a creature the characters are searching for.

You don't want a goal to show up right away. If you draw a goal card earlier than you want, give the adventurers only a hint of the goal's presence: perhaps the monsters they encounter are hunting the same creature, and its tracks can still be found. Or the encounter might take place within an ancient construction similar to the ruin they're searching for. Draw a replacement for the goal card, and shuffle the goal card into the deck. You might allow the goal to elude the characters twice before they finally reach it.

Another way to handle a goal is to omit the goal card from the deck at the beginning of the session and shuffle it in when the characters reach a particular milestone. For example, suppose the goal is to defeat a gnoll fang of Yeenoghu responsible for raiding nearby villages. There might be four ordinary gnolls (minions of the fang of Yeenoghu) in the encounter deck. Once the characters have killed three of the minions, shuffle the goal card in. That way, the characters always meet the minions first.

The goal card might also be one of a pair of twin cards, which both increases the chance that characters will find it later in their exploration and ensures that a specific creature (the other twin card) is always encountered with the goal.

Evolving the Encounter Deck

Evolving your encounter deck fosters a sense of progress, creating a rough narrative arc as the adventurers explore an area. You can evolve the deck to make encounters progressively harder, or you can change the flavor of encounters, such as adding creatures from a particular environment.

One way to accomplish this is to build two encounter decks. Draw cards from the first encounter deck, and when you remove cards from that deck, replace those cards with an equal number of random cards

from the second deck. This method is particularly effective if the second deck has a markedly different theme. You might start with an encounter deck featuring mostly dungeon scavengers, like rats and carrion crawlers, then slowly add in cards from a deck made up of Undead creatures and cultists.

Alternatively, you can use special cards such as noncombat encounter cards to tell you when to begin shuffling in cards from the second deck. For example, adventurers exploring a sylvan woodland might encounter mostly elves and Fey, but you might include a noncombat encounter card representing the party's discovery of a scorched clearing. After that encounter, you can start shuffling in cards representing gnolls and hyenas—the cause of the destruction.

If you have a goal card (see the "Special Cards" section above), you don't want the adventurers to reach the goal too early; don't put that card into the deck until the characters defeat one or more creatures from the second deck. At that point, shuffle the goal card into the second deck.

Sample Encounter Decks

These sample decks, best suited for 4th- to 6th-level characters, feature monsters from the *Monster Manual* and *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*. If you don't have *Monsters of the Multiverse*, omit those cards from the deck.

Entries with a multiplication sign indicate that the card represents multiple monsters. Monsters in the same group are assigned cards with the same face value (for example, all bandits are represented by king cards), but not all monsters with the same value are a group (the owlbears, for example, hunt alone). This makes it easier to see when you've drawn multiple cards that form an encounter.

You can use these decks as examples for building your own. You can use them separately when the characters are traveling through suitable terrain, or you can combine them (see "Evolving the Encounter Deck" above), so characters who are exploring a forest (using the forest encounter deck) slowly discover the vile demonic influence corrupting the place as you shuffle in cards from the corrupted lands encounter deck.

Forest Encounter Deck

Card	Creature	Challenge	Group
A ♠	**Young green dragon**	8	—
A ♣	**Druid** (friend)	—	—
K ♠	**Bandit captain**	2	Bandits
K ♣	**Bandit** ×4	1/8	Bandits
K ♥	**Bandit** ×4	1/8	Bandits
Q ♠	**Owlbear**	3	—
Q ♣	**Owlbear**	3	—
J ♠	**Ettercap**	2	Spiders
J ♣	**Swarm of insects (spiders)**	2	Spiders
J ♥	**Giant spider** ×2	1	Spiders
J ♦	**Giant spider** ×2	1	Spiders
9 ♣	**Giant boar**	2	—
8 ♠	**Ankheg** (lurker)	2	—
7 ♠	**Displacer beast** (twin)	3	—
7 ♣	**Displacer beast** (twin)	3	—
6 ♠	**Worg** ×2 (lurker)	1/2	—
5 ♠	**Pegasus**	2	—
5 ♣	**Pegasus**	2	—
4 ♠	**Shambling mound**	5	—
3 ♠	**Vampiric mist***	3	—
2 ♠	Draw two	—	—

Corrupted Lands Encounter Deck

Card	Creature	Challenge	Group
A ♦	**Shoosuva***	8	—
A ♥	**Gold dragon wyrmling** (friend)	—	—
K ♦	**Ochre jelly** (lurker)	2	—
Q ♥	**Nothic** (twin)	2	—
Q ♦	**Nothic** (twin)	2	—
10 ♠	**Cult fanatic**	2	Cultists
10 ♣	**Veteran**	3	Cultists
10 ♥	**Cultist** ×4	1/8	Cultists
10 ♦	**Maw demon***	1	Cultists
9 ♠	**Gnoll fang of Yeenoghu**	4	Gnolls
9 ♥	**Gnoll pack lord**	2	Gnolls
9 ♦	**Gnoll**	1/2	Gnolls
8 ♥	**Vrock**	6	—
7 ♥	**Harpy**	1	—
7 ♦	**Harpy**	1	—
6 ♥	**Manticore**	3	—
5 ♥	**Deathlock*** (twin)	4	—
5 ♦	**Ghoul** ×2 (twin)	1	—
4 ♥	**Gibbering mouther** (lurker)	2	—
3 ♥	**Treant** (noncombat encounter)	—	—
2 ♦	Draw two	—	—

*This monster appears in *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*. Omit this card if you don't have that book.

CHAPTER 4

PUZZLE

THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES PUZZLES, RIDDLES, and traps themed to the *Deck of Many Things* for Dungeon Masters' use.

Puzzles

This section presents two puzzles designed to invite group participation and challenge characters (and players) of any stripe. Each puzzle can be included in your campaign as presented or customized to fit the needs of a specific adventure.

The following information appears in each puzzle:

Difficulty. Each puzzle is classified as easy or medium. The harder the puzzle, the more likely the players will need hints to solve it.

Puzzle Features. This section presents an overview of the puzzle's features and how to interact with the puzzle.

Solution. This section explains how the puzzle is solved.

Hint Checks. This section suggests hints that characters might use their skills to reveal. Provide one or more of the hints if the characters get stuck. If a character has proficiency in a hint's associated skill, share that hint if that character asks for help.

Customizing the Puzzle. This section explores how to integrate the puzzle into your adventures, alter its difficulty, or make other adjustments.

I once fixated on deciphering a puzzle for six hours straight. Euryale had to remind me to eat.

The Perfect Hand

Difficulty: Easy

This sorting puzzle can be used to indicate the presence of a hidden treasure or secret passage. It fits well in a dungeon, a haunted manor, or an abandoned gambling den.

A statue of a halfling, her brow knitted in concentration, is seated at a stone table before you. She holds her empty palms close to her chest, her fingers cupped slightly. A single playing card, the Rogue, lies flat on the table. Suddenly, the statue speaks:

"Still searching for the perfect hand? Find the four missing cards and bring them here. The treacherous Rogue is poised to backstab the Sage. The haughty Sage, full of disdain, won't deign to be next to the Jester. The foolish Jester does a headstand while gazing at the faraway Knight. The loyal Knight stands beside the Sage. Behind the Jester, the impassive Fates hang like bats from the sky."

Puzzle Features

The statue speaks whenever anyone approaches, repeating the message each time.

The card on the table is a nonmagical version of the Rogue card from a *Deck of Many Things*. The four other cards mentioned in the statue's message—Sage, Jester, Knight, and Fates—are each located in a different area nearby.

Grooves in the statue's palms are perfectly sized to hold the cards. Each card can fit into the palms either upright or reversed (upside down).

Solution

The characters must find the four missing cards, then return here. Using the clues in the statue's message, all five cards must be arranged in the correct order and orientation (upright or reversed) in the statue's hands. Diagram 4.1 shows the solution.

A hollow thud emanates from the statue if the cards are arranged incorrectly in its hands. Once the cards are placed in the correct arrangement, the statue slides aside, revealing a secret door.

Knight | Sage | Rogue | Jester (Reversed) | Fates (Reversed)

Diagram 4.1: The Perfect Hand Puzzle Solution

Hint Checks

Any character can make these ability checks to receive a hint:

Intelligence (Investigation) DC 10. For the cards to face the directions indicated in the statue's instructions, some must be placed in the statue's hands upside down.

Wisdom (Insight) DC 10. The statue's message explains the proper order in which to sort the cards.

Wisdom (Perception) DC 10. Grooves in the statue's palms would perfectly fit a fanned hand of five cards.

Customizing the Puzzle

Characters must use deductive reasoning to arrange a group of objects in the correct order. It's not important that the objects be cards—they could just as easily be statuettes or paintings on the wall. As long as the characters are given enough clues to correctly arrange the objects without having to guess, this puzzle can take any number of forms.

Missing Pieces. You can choose where the missing cards are located. For example, the characters might need to decode a map or navigate a maze to find the cards. You can also make this puzzle more complex by separating the clues. For instance, have each clue come from a different statue or scrap of parchment somewhere in the dungeon.

Another way to adjust the overall difficulty of the puzzle is to make acquiring the cards more challenging once they've been found, perhaps by requiring the characters to defeat monsters or overcome a test of skill.

Starting with a Full Hand. To make this puzzle easier and quicker, place all five cards on the table in front of the statue so the characters can begin interpreting the clues right away.

Unseen Order

Difficulty: Medium

This guessing game requires characters to use deductive reasoning to determine the correct sequence of four cards. They must use a game board and six stacks of cards on a table to make their guesses. Give the players a copy of Unseen Order Handouts 1 and 2, then read the following boxed text aloud:

> A long table fills the center of this chamber. On the table is a peculiar game board carved with a grid of rectangular grooves, four per row. Each row is numbered one through ten on its left side, and on the right side of each row are four small glass orbs. Beside the game board are ten stacks of playing cards. Each stack has four copies of the following six cards: Comet, Gem, Moon, Skull, Star, and Sun.
>
> A ghostly goblin in jester garb manifests on the far side of the table. She holds out four cards, faces hidden, between her fingers. She then intones a riddle:
>
> *Guess my hand and win the game.*
> *Place your guess and I'll tell you plain:*
> *Right card, right spot? An orb turns red!*
> *Right card, wrong spot? Blue instead.*
> *Ten guesses, no tricks, good luck to you.*
> *Guess it right in six or less,*
> *Win an extra prize, woohoo!*

Puzzle Features

The cards on the table are nonmagical versions of those from the *Deck of Many Things*. If the characters struggle to understand the riddle, the ghost can explain the rules more clearly:

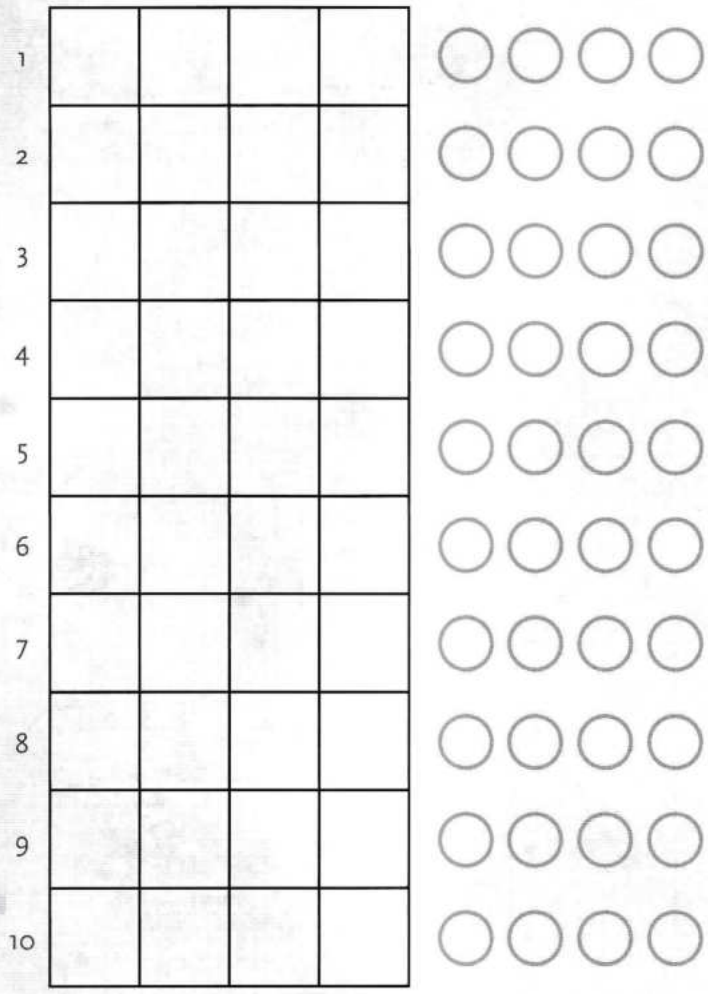


Diagram 4.2: Unseen Order Handout 1

Objective. The characters must guess which cards are in the ghost's hand and in what order.

Rules. To make their first guess, the characters must place four cards into the empty slots of the first row on the board. The ghost's hand might consist of four different cards, or it might include two or more copies of the same card. If a card in that row is the correct card in the correct slot, the orb next to that row turns red. If a guessed card is one of the cards in the ghost's hand but is in the wrong slot, an orb turns blue. The characters can use this information to make another guess by placing four more cards in the next row down.

Winning the Game. There are ten rows for cards, meaning the characters have ten chances to correctly guess the ghost's hand. If they guess the hand in fewer than ten tries, they win a treasure of your choice. If the characters find the solution in six or fewer guesses, the ghost tells them of an even greater treasure buried at a distant adventure location.

Losing the Game. If the characters fail to deduce the ghost's hand in ten guesses and want to try again, the ghost selects a new hand, and the game starts over.

Other Materials. You don't need cards to use this puzzle; you can use paper, a red pen, and a blue pen. Write down the puzzle's solution on a piece of paper, and fold the paper so the players can't see it.

Give the players a copy of Unseen Order Handout 1 or a sheet of grid paper. Ask them to write their guess in the first row of empty boxes, writing the card names or drawing symbols like those provided in Unseen Order Handout 2, the symbol key. Secretly compare their guess with the solution. In the empty circles next to their guess, color one circle red for each correctly guessed card in the correct position, and color a circle blue for each correctly guessed card in the wrong position.

Symbol Key

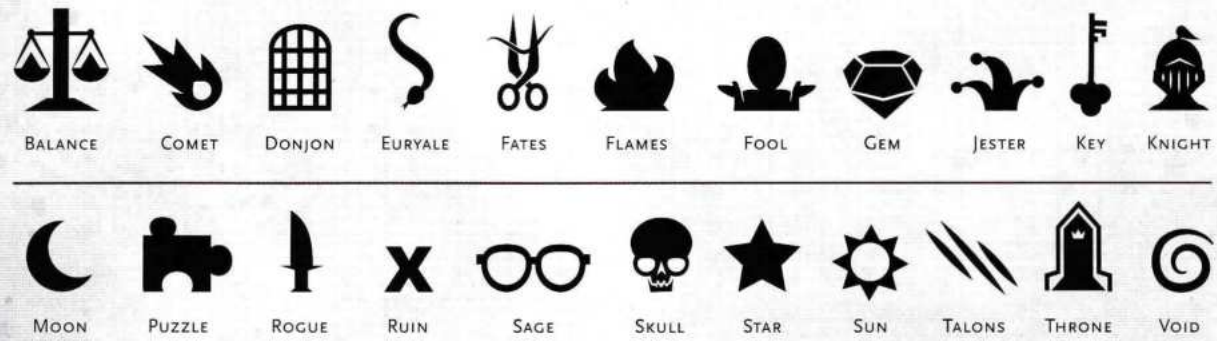


Diagram 4.3: Unseen Order Handout 2

Solution

The answer to this puzzle can be determined only through logic. Diagram 4.4 illustrates one possible hand the ghost might have (Moon, Sun, Skull, and Gem, in that order) and how the game might play out. You can devise alternate solutions by selecting a different hand of four cards.

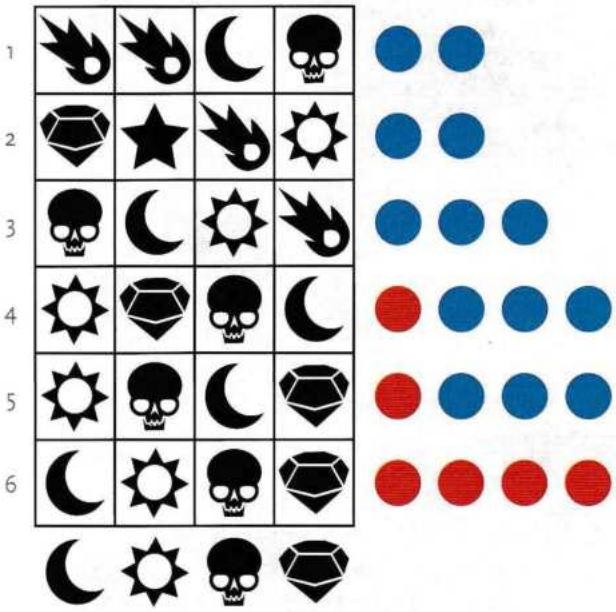


Diagram 4.4 Unseen Order Solution (Example)

Hint Checks

Any character can make the following ability check to receive a hint:

Charisma (Persuasion) DC 10. If asked politely, the ghost provides an example of how the game might play out. Show the players diagram 4.4. Choose a different solution for the actual puzzle.

Customizing the Puzzle

As long as the basic rules of the game remain the same, the puzzle can take any number of forms, including differently shaped tokens or game figurines such as chess pieces.

Increasing the Difficulty. You can make this puzzle more difficult by increasing the number of cards in the ghost's hand or by adding more possible cards to choose from. Each new variable makes the game much harder; consider increasing the number of guesses the characters can make.

Riddles

A riddle is a verbal puzzle. Riddles can be simple or complex, brief or protracted, and low stakes or deadly. This section includes basic guidance for DMs who want to design and use riddles in adventures.

Why Use Riddles?

Riddles are a staple of the fantasy adventure genre. Used judiciously, riddles neatly illustrate the wondrous, whimsical, and often dangerous nature of a fantasy world. A good riddle can challenge all manner of adventurers—novice or veteran, weak or strong—and can make the reward at the end of the adventure feel well earned.

Riddles can be used to do any of the following:

- Provide an opportunity for the characters to engage with a creature that's too strong to defeat in combat
- Reward clever characters who overcome a challenge with brains instead of brawn
- Make a villain, an area, or an object seem more interesting or mysterious

However, using too many riddles can slow gameplay. Use them thoughtfully and sparingly. Especially tricky riddles should entail worthwhile rewards. Be wary of using riddles found online, especially if players can access the internet during the session.

Where to Use Riddles

Puzzle-loving antagonists and mischievous monsters are the most common ways to introduce a riddle. Here are some suggestions for how to incorporate riddles into adventures:

Creatures. Not every adversary wants to engage in mortal combat. Certain creatures might delight in a battle of wits. The reward for answering a creature's riddle might be a small treasure, a bit of helpful magic, or permission to pass through the monster's lair unscathed. If combat is inevitable, the answer to a monster's riddle might reveal useful information like the monster's secret weapon or hidden weakness.

Items. Few things are more enticing than a rare item with magical properties hidden behind a riddle. Items have the added benefit of being portable, allowing the characters to ponder a confounding curio during short rests or while traveling. Sand-combing adventurers might find an incomprehensible message in a bottle that, when decoded, reveals itself to be a treasure map. The inscrutable runes carved onto a cursed bow might hold the key to undoing the weapon's evil magic.

Locations. Mystical grottoes, forgotten temples, and secret hideouts might all be locked behind befuddling riddles. A lich might enchant the statues outside her innermost sanctum to ask a magical riddle before opening the way. The strange poem on a tombstone could be a clue to the whereabouts of a buried fortune. A series of frost giant runes etched onto a stone wall could, when decoded, activate a magical doorway to a long-lost city.

Writing Riddles

Writing new riddles for your group can be fun and satisfying—as long as the players don't guess the right answer in seconds or, conversely, rip their hair out in frustration. Here are some tips:

Reinforce a Theme. A good riddle is related to something the characters are currently dealing with. A tricky beholder, for example, might pose riddles whose answers all have something to do with eyes or orbs.

Give Three Clues. A strong riddle provides multiple clues about the answer; three is a good number. To vary a riddle's difficulty, you could split the clues up, providing the first clue initially, then the second and third if the characters ask for a hint.

Rhyming. Though it's not always possible or necessary to give a riddle rhythm and rhyme, doing so is a good way to help the characters remember the riddle. Rhyming words can also be clues, indicating which part of the riddle is most important.

Guesses and Time. Give characters plenty of time to guess a riddle's answer, and let them make multiple guesses. In the game, characters might have hours or days to answer a particularly challenging riddle. In the real world, you could pose a riddle near the end of a game session, allowing your players to ponder guesses before reconvening. (Remind them of the clues at that time.)

Hints. For a high-stakes riddle, consider preparing one or two hints for characters who are stumped. To earn a hint, a character might have to succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Twenty-Two Riddles

Here are twenty-two riddles you can use in any campaign. Each riddle's answer is the name of a card from the *Deck of Many Things*:

1. In daylight, my gray cloak flies high. At night, you huddle by my side. I destroy, I dance; I forge swords, I eat plants.
2. I have teeth yet cannot bite. I have no blade, yet I'm worth more to most adventurers than any knife.
3. It can be as large as a nation or as small as a rock, as intangible as words or as solid as a box; sometimes life-threatening, often just a plaything, but always befuddling.
4. I'm a royal servant wielding words instead of blades—a painted courtier, my smile never fades. Wielder of guile, often reviled.
5. I'm the grim orb atop one's neck. Your own you wish whole; your enemy's wrecked. My form inspires dread, yet without me you're dead.
6. I arrive every day and leave every night. Though you can't look right at me, I'm a welcome sight.
7. A glowing eye that blinks all month, a wandering light to guide the wolf's hunt.
8. Though always shiny, in daylight I hide. At night, I'm one of many spread far and wide.
9. Clutch your purse, call the guards, but don't turn your back. My dagger is its sharpest when I sneak, then attack.
10. Dwarven queens might choose stone; ogre kings make do with bone. Wood or leather, whatever's your pleasure—after all, I'm only as strong as whoever calls me their own.
11. Upon my head a serpent's nest, my friend and sister loved me best. Istus made the deck for us, and all its secrets we keep in trust.
12. Aimless wanderer, nonsense ponderer—I've been called it all. Some think my wit is a bit amiss, but if you ask me, ignorance is bliss!
13. I'm the cosmic paintbrush whose stroke fades fast. From afar I grant wishes; up close I destroy all in my path.
14. Savior of kidnapped nobles and champion of my liege, I'll fight loyally for my kingdom on foot or on steed.
15. My opposite is discord, and fairness is my friend; when you walk the tightrope, you pray you have me, from end to end.
16. I'm the final claimer of kingdoms, the true profiteer of war. But each city I inherit crumbles till there's nothing more.
17. I'll consume anything but contain nothing. Where there's emptiness, I am there. If you see me, despair.
18. Most are well hidden, though adventurers can always find one. It's a criminal's worst fear, and a despot's secret weapon.
19. Found in crown, in dirt, or in humble ring—just a pebble, really, but a splendid thing.
20. I'm an expert in arcane knowledge, as smart as anyone in college. I've the answer to every question, but you'll pay for my erudition. Who am I?
21. I snatch; I rip; I slash; I grip. I'm the daggers wielded by every bird above, from fiercest griffon to most graceful dove.
22. The prosperous believe we smile on them; the doomed beg for reprieve. But no one can outrun us or the destines we weave.

Riddle Answers

Here are the answers to the twenty-two riddles:

1. Flames	9. Rogue	17. Void
2. Key	10. Throne	18. Donjon
3. Puzzle	11. Euryale	19. Gem
4. Jester	12. Fool	20. Sage
5. Skull	13. Comet	21. Talons
6. Sun	14. Knight	22. Fates
7. Moon	15. Balance	
8. Star	16. Ruin	

Trap Rooms

Traps can be as puzzling as any riddle or maze, but they're far deadlier! This section includes a collection of trap rooms: dungeon chambers loaded with hazards to test adventurers' wits and fortitude. A trap room is a group of traps designed to work in tandem. Taken separately, each element of a trap room might be only a minor setback for the characters, but when combined, those elements form a unique and memorable challenge.

Trap rooms aren't likely to be found in just any abandoned manor or forgotten temple; elaborate contraptions like these appear in dungeons designed to guard truly valuable treasures and to punish overcurious adventurers.

Each of the trap rooms described below includes a range of suggested character levels to match that room's difficulty. Each entry also includes information about the trap room's features and a diagram illustrating its design. You can use the trap guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to adjust these traps' severity.

Balance and Ruin

Mechanical Trap, Deadly (5th–10th Level)

A narrow wooden beam spans the length of this hundred-foot-long, fifty-foot-wide chamber. The beam crosses a twenty-five-foot-deep pit filled with slowly turning, bloodstained gears. The chamber's side walls, each 25 feet from the balance beam, are made of smooth metal sheeting.

The most obvious way to cross the room is to walk along the beam. But there's a hidden danger: a pressure plate beneath the beam's closest end causes the metal walls to emit a strong magnetic field.

Fulcrum

Stone pillars set at regular intervals appear to hold up the beam. But the pillar beneath the beam's center is a fulcrum (like the center of a seesaw), which gives the beam a nearly indiscernible tilt. A creature that examines the beam and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check notices the tilt. When the characters enter the room, the beam's weight rests on the far end. When any amount of weight is placed on the stretch of beam between the characters and the fulcrum, unless a counterweight is placed on the opposite side, the end of the beam sinks a few inches and presses on a hidden pressure plate. If all the weight is removed from the beam at once, the beam remains in whatever position it was last in.

Diagram 4.5: Balance and Ruin

Balance Beam

The balance beam is difficult terrain. A creature that ends its turn on the beam or that is on the beam when it tilts must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to keep its balance. If the walls are magnetized (see below) and the creature is wearing metal armor or holding metal equipment, the creature has disadvantage on this save. A creature that fails the save by 4 or less slips, landing on the beam, and has the prone condition. A creature that fails this save by 5 or more falls into the gear pit (see "Gear Pit" below).

Magnetic Walls

When the balance beam's weight is on the pressure plate, the metal walls emit a magnetic field. Any creature wearing metal armor or holding metal equipment who isn't on the beam is pulled to the nearest metal wall and sticks to it, taking 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage. Any creature stuck to the wall has the restrained condition until the magnetic field deactivates. Removing pressure from the plate—such as by putting more weight on the opposite end of the beam—deactivates the magnetic field. If the whole party has access to flight, you can make the trap suitably challenging by removing the pressure plate and having the magnetic field toggle on or off in 1-minute intervals or whenever a creature ends its turn on a different side of the pit from where it started. A character wearing metal armor or holding

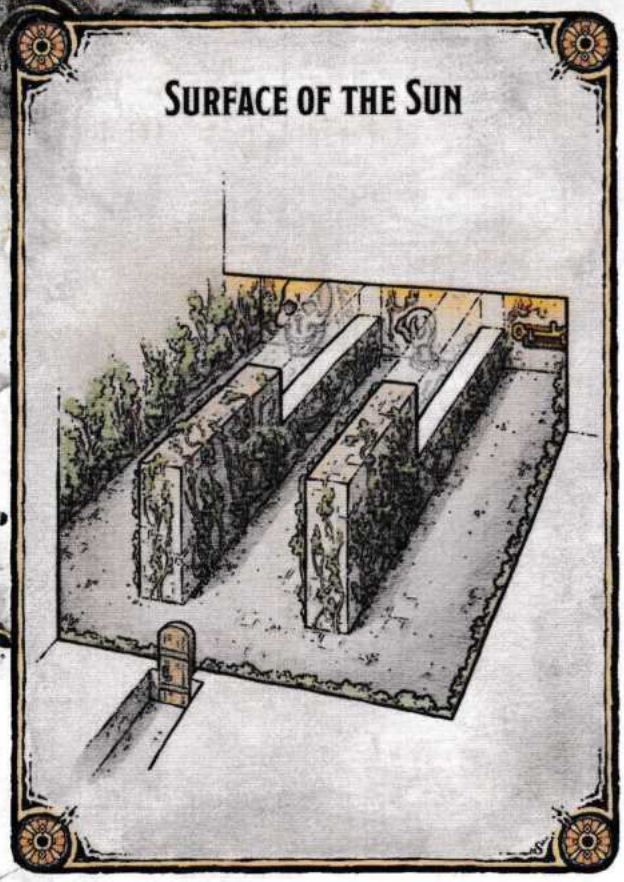


DIAGRAM 4.6: SURFACE OF THE SUN

metal equipment who flies across the hall while the walls are magnetized is pulled to the wall and stuck to it.

GEAR PIT

Whenever a creature falls into the pit or ends its turn there, that creature must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 55 (10d10) bludgeoning damage and have the prone condition. A creature that is prone on the gears can't use movement to stand up without first using an action and a Tiny object to jam the gears below it. Those gears remain jammed until the end of the character's turn, whereupon the Tiny object tumbles loose, falls through the gears, and is lost.

SURFACE OF THE SUN

Magical Trap, Dangerous (1st–4th Level)

Thick vines cover the walls of this high-ceilinged chamber. The chamber splits into three long, parallel hallways separated by brick walls that don't quite reach the ceiling. The ceiling emits a scorching, fiery light.

At the far end of the rightmost hall, a large golden key is mounted on a sword rack. At the end of the middle hall is a pedestal shaped like a bird's upraised talon holding a silver orb. The wall at the end of the leftmost hall is molded into the shape of a large skull whose nose cavity looks like a keyhole.

Characters must use the large key to unlock the skull door. The silver orb is an enticing treasure, but it's out of the way, and every second of delay means more time spent under the ceiling's heat.

Each hallway is 15 feet wide and 100 feet long. The ceiling is 50 feet high, and the brick walls are 40 feet tall.

SUN DAMAGE

The blazing light that fills this trap room deals damage to every creature in the area. On initiative count 20 (losing ties), each creature in the area takes 5 (1d10) radiant damage.

TALONS PEDESTAL

The silver orb, which is 1 foot in diameter, can't be removed while the talons clutch it. The pedestal is trapped. Touching the silver orb causes the talons to snap closed. A creature that tries to take the orb takes 11 (2d10) slashing damage and has the grappled condition (escape DC 15) as the talons grab hold of it, releasing the orb. The talons have an AC of 19, 10 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

With a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, a character can spot the pressure plate that activates the talons through a narrow slit on the east side of the pedestal. A character can disable the pressure plate with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, which causes the talons to open. A Medium or Small creature grappled by the talons can't reach this pressure plate.

Undamaged, the silver orb is a valuable art object worth 500 gp.

OVERSIZED KEY

This gold key is 4 feet long and weighs 100 pounds. One round after it is removed from the sword stand, it comes to life, revealing itself to be a living object (use the **flying sword** stat block). The key does everything it can to return to its stand, attacking anyone who tries to stop it. If the key is destroyed by reducing it to 0 hit points, it must be repaired (such as with the *Mending* spell) before it can be used in the skull door.

Skull Door

The oversized key fits the skull sculpture's nose. Inserting the key and turning it clockwise unlatches the door, which swings inward.

Vines

The plants that cover the walls are fragile from the scorching light and not helpful for climbing. A character must succeed on a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check to climb the walls.

Test of the Empty Moon

Mechanical Trap, Setback (1st–4th Level)

In the center of this square dungeon chamber, the floor drops into a massive silver bowl. Shallow stone channels in the floor slope toward the bowl. Sewer pipes jut from the ceiling over each channel.

A portcullis in the north wall blocks the way forward. Above the portcullis, a large glyph depicts a waxing crescent moon, its right edge illuminated by the faintest sliver of light. A large iron lever juts from the floor to the right of the portcullis.

Adding sufficient weight to a hidden scale beneath the bowl opens the portcullis.

Metal Bowl

The bowl is 30 feet wide and 20 feet deep and weighs 2,000 pounds. Its smooth texture and shape make it difficult terrain. A creature that enters the bowl or ends its turn inside it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or have the prone condition. The bowl is impossible to climb out of without assistance such as rope or magic. The bowl's lip is flush with the floor, but the bowl wobbles slightly if pushed.

Weight Scale and Moon Glyph

Hidden beneath the bowl is an *Immovable Rod* that separates the bowl from a large weight scale just below it. The rod can be detected with the *Detect Magic* spell. Deactivating the rod (see "Lever" below) causes it to fall away, dropping the bowl onto the scale. The rod can't be recovered from this room.

Transmutation magic connects the scale to the moon glyph above the portcullis. As more weight is placed on the scale, the moon glyph above the portcullis gets fuller and glows brighter. When a total of 4,000 pounds of pressure is applied to the scale, the glyph is fully illuminated, like a full moon, and the portcullis opens. The portcullis remains open as long as the moon glyph remains full.

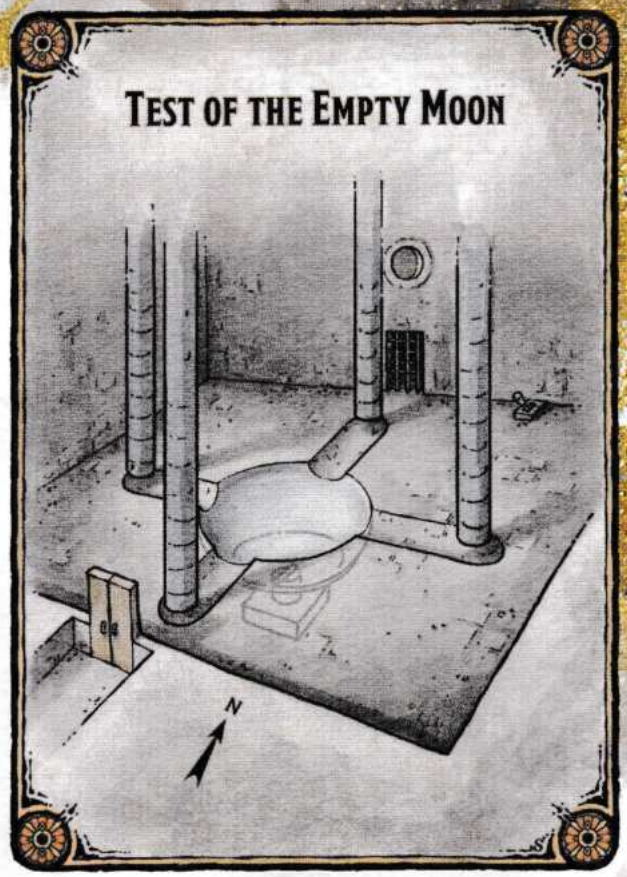


Diagram 4.7: Test of the Empty Moon

Lever

When the lever is pulled, a mechanism in the floor pushes the button that deactivates the *Immovable Rod*. The weight of the bowl causes the moon glyph to glow like a half moon. Simultaneously, valves open within the sewer pipes, releasing four oozes (see "Monsters" below) and a flood of water that pours from each pipe, down the channels on the floor, and into the bowl. The pipes release 1,000 pounds of water every minute. After 2 minutes, the bowl is full. After 4 minutes, several inches of water cover the floor, and enough water has poured into the room to illuminate the moon glyph; at this point, the flooding stops and the portcullis opens.

Monsters

When the lever is pulled, four **ochre jellies** are released, one slithering from each pipe and crawling along the ceiling to drop on the characters. Each ochre jelly weighs 500 pounds.

Under Pressure

Canny characters might realize that shoving enemies into the bowl is a quick way to resolve the trap. Spells such as *Telekinesis* or *Levitate* could also feasibly add pressure to the scale beneath the bowl.

CHAPTER 5

GEM

THE GEM CARD BEQUEATHS IMMENSE WEALTH to whoever draws it. This chapter provides advice for DMs on how to integrate this sudden wealth into your game. It also presents new magic items associated with and inspired by the *Deck of Many Things*.

Magic Items in This Book

The Magic Item by Name table presents all magic items in this book.

Magic Items by Name

Magic Item	Rarity	Chapter
Antimagic Armor	Very rare	9
Armor of Fungal Spores	Uncommon	9
Armor of the Fallen	Uncommon	9
Armor of Weightlessness	Uncommon	9
Baleful Talon	Very rare	5
Blasted Goggles	Uncommon	20
Bloodrage Greataxe	Uncommon	9
Bloodseeker Ammunition	Very rare	9
Boomerang Shield	Uncommon	9
Bow of Conflagration	Rare	9
Bow of Melodies	Very rare	9
Breastplate of Balance	Rare	5
Card Sharp's Deck	Uncommon	6
Clockwork Armor	Very rare	9
Crown of Whirling Comets	Very rare	5
Deck of Dimensions	Very rare	6
Deck of Many More Things	Legendary	7
Deck of Miscellany	Uncommon	6
Deck of Oracles	Rare	8
Deck of Wild Cards	Very rare	6
Deck of Wonder	Uncommon	7
Donjon's Sundering Sphere	Rare	5
Dried Leech	Uncommon	9
Euryale's Aegis	Legendary	5
Fabulist Gem	Uncommon	5
Fate Cutter Shears	Very rare	8
Fate Dealer's Deck	Varies	8
Feywrought Armor	Rare	9
Fool's Blade	Very rare	5
Forcebreaker Weapon	Very rare	9
Glimmering Moonbow	Rare	5
Gloomwrought Armor	Rare	9
Grasping Whip	Rare	9
Hammer of Runic Focus	Very rare	9
House of Cards	Uncommon	8
Jester's Mask	Legendary	5
Plate of Knight's Fellowship	Uncommon	5
Ring of Puzzler's Wit	Uncommon	5
Rod of Hellish Flames	Very rare	5
Rogue's Mantle	Rare	5
Ruinous Flail	Rare	5
Sage's Signet	Varies	5
Shield of the Tortoise	Uncommon	9
Shrieking Greaves	Rare	20

The Gem card leads Asteria to fabulous wealth.

Magic Item	Rarity	Chapter
Skull Helm	Very rare	5
Sling of Giant Felling	Uncommon	9
Spindle of Fate	Legendary	5
Starshot Crossbow	Rare	5
Stonemaker War Pick	Very rare	9
Sun Staff	Rare	5
Sword of the Planes	Legendary	9
Telescopic Transporter	Legendary	13
Tidecaller Trident	Very rare	9
Voidwalker Armor	Rare	5
Warrior's Passkey	Rare	5
Weapon of Throne's Command	Very rare	5
Winged Ammunition	Uncommon	9
Wraps of Unarmed Prowess	Varies	9

Sudden Riches

The wealth promised by the Gem card need not appear spontaneously at the characters' feet. Instead, the card might be an omen foretelling a future event. The Gem Stories table provides suggestions for incorporating the Gem card's effects into your campaign's storyline.

Gem Stories

d6	Moment
1	One of the party's patrons dies, and the patron's will bequeaths all their wealth to the characters.
2	The party is hired by a disguised dragon who offers them part of its hoard as payment.
3	A character falls through a crevice and discovers a massive deposit of glittering ore.
4	The party finds a map in an old bottle that leads to a buried treasure chest filled with ancient coins.
5	The local merchants' guild, enamored with the party's exploits, offers to sponsor the characters.
6	The characters are invited to participate in a grand talent competition. Despite the odds, one of the characters wins.

Dealing with Wealth

Characters accumulate wealth over the course of their adventures—sometimes, a lot of wealth! These riches might come slowly over a long adventuring career or in a sudden stroke of good fortune, such as when a character draws the Gem card from a *Deck of Many Things*. Regardless, wealth poses special challenges to your campaign.

Avoid the Profit Motive

If your characters are motivated primarily by money, wealth can threaten the entire campaign. After all, when mercenaries have all the money they'd ever need, why should they risk life and limb any more? Avoid this problem by ensuring your characters develop strong personal reasons to continue to adventure, even if they begin their adventuring careers in the pursuit of wealth. Perhaps they want revenge on a despicable villain, they enjoy exploring, or they crave the respect of their peers. Money won't provide any of these things, though it might make it easier to overcome obstacles along the way.

Power Can't Be Bought

Characters who come into a lot of wealth might try to buy magic items that make them more powerful. Remember, you decide what magic items, if any, can be bought and sold in a settlement. You don't have to provide access to magic items too powerful for the characters. Expendable magic items, like scrolls and potions, are a good compromise; they're useful but have fewer long-term effects on your campaign. If an item still proves to be too powerful, you don't have to provide access to it again.

Spread the Wealth

Wealth can transform people's lives; you just have to give the characters good reasons for spending their gold. Friends and loved ones, for example, can benefit from their largess, especially if these allies are experiencing hard times. If characters are attached to a settlement and its inhabitants, improving a neighborhood or the whole settlement can quickly expend their new wealth.

But an ally shouldn't simply approach characters and ask for money; instead, make the ally's financial needs part of a story. For example, if a dragon destroys the castle of a just ruler and devours the ruler's family, characters might be expected to hunt down the dragon, but wealthy ones can pay for the castle to be rebuilt and buy enough diamonds to cast *Resurrection* for the ruler and their entire family.

Magic Items

This section contains twenty-two magic items, each inspired by a different card from the *Deck of Many Things*. Some items emulate a card's effects, while others draw inspiration from a card's iconography or name.

Magic Item Descriptions

The following magic items are presented in alphabetical order.

Baleful Talon

Weapon (Dagger), Very Rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this hooked, obsidian dagger.

When you hit a creature with this magic weapon and roll a 19 or 20 on the attack roll, the creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw as the dagger flares with sickly light. The creature takes 6d6 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. If this damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, the creature disintegrates into dust.

Breastplate of Balance

Armor (Breastplate), Rare (Requires Attunement)

This burnished copper breastplate looks as if it were made of interlocking gears. Merchant's scales are emblazoned across the chest.

The armor has 4 charges. You can use the charges in the following ways while wearing the armor:

Equalize. When you or a creature you can see within 60 feet of yourself is about to roll a d20 with advantage or disadvantage, you can expend 1 charge and take a reaction to prevent the roll from being affected by advantage or disadvantage.

Expunge Imbalance. As a bonus action, you can expend 2 charges to cast the *Lesser Restoration* spell from the armor.

The armor regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn.

Crown of Whirling Comets

Crown of Whirling Comets

Wondrous Item, Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This delicate silver tiara is decorated with stellar iconography. While you wear the crown, the gems on the tiara's points detach and closely orbit your head.

The crown has 6 charges for the following properties, which you can use while wearing the crown:

Star Flight. As a bonus action, you can spend 1 charge to gain the power of flight for 10 minutes. For the duration, you gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed, and you can hover. While flying, you glow faintly with starlight.

Starlight Strike. As an action, you can spend any number of charges to launch bolts of frigid starlight. You launch a number of bolts equal to the number of charges spent, and you can direct the bolts to target one creature or several, so long as all creatures are within 120 feet of you and you can see them. The bolts automatically strike their targets, and each bolt deals 2d4 cold damage.

Whirling Hail. As an action, you can spend 3 charges and cast the *Ice Storm* spell (save DC 16).

The crown regains 1d6 expended charges daily at dawn.

Donjon's Sundering Sphere

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

This marble-size crystal sphere glows with extraplanar energy.

As part of attuning to this item, you press the crystal sphere to the hilt of a nonmagical melee weapon of your choice, magically attaching the sphere to the weapon. The weapon becomes a magic weapon with a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. While wielding this weapon, you gain the following benefits:

Dimensional Anchor. You have advantage on saving throws against spells or effects that would send you to an extradimensional space, a demiplane, or another plane of existence against your will.

Isolating Smite. When you hit a creature with this weapon, you can force the creature to make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is banished to a harmless demiplane until the end of its next turn. When the banished creature returns, it reappears in the space it left or the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

When you end your attunement to the sphere, the sphere harmlessly detaches from the weapon, and the weapon reverts to a nonmagical piece of equipment.

Euryale's Aegis

Euryale's Aegis

Armor (Shield), Legendary (Requires Attunement)

This gleaming brass shield bears a relief of the legendary medusa druid Euryale.

While wielding this shield, you gain the following benefits:

Blessing of Euryale. You have resistance to poison damage and are immune to the petrified condition.

Petrifying Heraldry. As a bonus action, you can make the front of the shield flare with a medusa's petrifying magic, causing the relief's eyes to glow brightly. Choose one creature you can see within 30 feet of you. The creature must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, or it has the restrained condition as its body turns to stone. The restrained creature must make another DC 20 Constitution saving throw at the start of its next turn. On a failed save, the creature has the petrified condition for 24 hours. On a successful save, the restrained condition ends. Once this bonus action is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Spellcasting. While wielding the shield, you can use an action to cast one of the following spells from it: *Lesser Restoration*, *Locate Creature*, or *Transport via Plants*. Once you use the shield to cast a spell, the shield can't cast that spell again until the next dawn.

Fabulist Gem

Wondrous Item, Uncommon (Requires Attunement)

This glittering red gem is commonly found embedded in a ring or brooch.

While wearing the gem, you gain the following benefits.

Counterfeit Coins. You can use your action to magically create a pile of coins, worth no more than 100 gp total, in an unoccupied space within 10 feet of yourself. The pile must appear on a surface that can support it. After 1 hour, the coins vanish, regardless of where they are. Once this action is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Illusory Fashion. As a bonus action, you can magically change the appearance of your clothing and armor. You can change the style, color, and apparent quality of what you're wearing, or you can make it appear as if you were wearing different garments entirely. In either case, the changes wrought by this magic fail to pass physical inspection.

Fool's Blade

Weapon (Any Sword), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This weapon appears ordinary, but it bears strong illusion magic that allows its wielder to skillfully deceive opponents.

You have a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. While wielding it, you also gain the following benefits:

Fool's Feint. As a bonus action, you can feint, choosing a creature within 5 feet of you as your target. Until the start of your next turn, you have advantage on attack rolls against the target. Once this bonus action is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Misdirect. When a creature within 60 feet of you targets you with an attack roll, you can use your reaction to require that creature to make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the attack instead targets another creature of your choice that is within the attacker's reach. Once this reaction has been used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Glimmering Moonbow

Weapon (Any Bow), Rare (Requires Attunement)

This silver-and-black bow is engraved with the phases of the moon. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

When you hit with a ranged attack roll using this magic bow, the target takes an extra 1d6 radiant damage. If you load no ammunition in the weapon, it produces its own, automatically creating one piece of magic ammunition when you make a ranged attack with it. The ammunition created by the bow vanishes the instant after it hits or misses a target.

While wielding this magic bow, you can use a bonus action to enter a semi-incorporeal state until the start of your next turn. While semi-incorporeal, you have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. Once this bonus action is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Jester's Mask

Jester's Mask

Wondrous Item, Legendary (Requires Attunement by a Bard, Sorcerer, or Warlock)

This colorful, harlequin domino mask is edged with pearls. While wearing this mask, you gain the following benefits:

Charismatic Focus. You can use the mask as a spellcasting focus. You gain a +3 bonus to any spell attack rolls and spell saving throw DCs that use Charisma as the spellcasting ability.

Marvelous Escape. When a creature hits you with an attack roll, you can use your reaction to disappear in a puff of smoke and colorful sparkles. You take no damage and instead teleport, along with anything you are wearing or carrying, to an unoccupied space you can see within 30 feet of

yourself. Once this reaction is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Topsy-Turvy. When you roll a 1 on a d20, you can treat the roll as if you rolled a 20 instead. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Plate of Knight's Fellowship

Armor (Plate), Uncommon (Requires Attunement)

This gleaming set of silver-and-gold plate armor never tarnishes.

While wearing this armor, you can use a bonus action to summon the spirit of a warrior to your aid. The spirit's corporeal form manifests in an unoccupied space of your choice within 30 feet of you, and it uses the **knight** stat block. The spirit disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or after 1 minute, whichever comes first.

The spirit is an ally to you and your companions. In combat, the spirit shares your initiative count but takes its turn immediately after yours. The spirit obeys your commands (no action required by you); if you don't issue any commands, the spirit takes the Dodge action and uses its movement to avoid danger.

Once this bonus action is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Ring of Puzzler's Wit

Ring, Uncommon

This gold ring bears a fluorite stone and is enchanted to sharpen the wearer's mind.

The ring has 3 charges and regains 1d4 – 1 expended charges daily at dawn. When you make an Intelligence check, you can expend 1 charge to grant yourself advantage on the check.

Rod of Hellish Flames

Rod, Very Rare (Requires Attunement by a Spellcaster)

Glowing cinders orbit the flanged head of this black iron rod.

This rod can be used as an arcane focus. While holding this rod, you gain the following benefits:

Hellish Resistance. You have resistance to fire and necrotic damage.

Searing Rebuke. You can cast the *Hellish Rebuke* spell as a 4th-level spell (save DC 16) from the rod. Once you use the rod to cast the spell, the rod can't cast the spell again until the next dawn.

Surge of Brimstone. Whenever you cast a spell that deals fire or necrotic damage, you can use the rod to deal the maximum damage instead of rolling. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Rogue's Mantle

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

This dark, hooded mantle of thick cloth is infused with secretive and deceptive magic. While wearing it, you gain the following benefits:

Darkvision. You gain darkvision within a range of 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, the mantle increases your darkvision's range by 60 feet instead.

Move in Shadows. While you are in dim light or darkness, you can use a bonus action to teleport, along with anything you are wearing or carrying, up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space you can see that is also in dim light or darkness. You then have advantage on the first melee attack you make before the end of the turn.

Willful Enmity. You can cast the *Antagonize* spell (save DC 15; see chapter 7) from the mantle. Once the mantle has cast the spell, it can't cast the spell again until the next dawn.

Ruinous Flail

Weapon (Flail), Rare (Requires Attunement)

This ash-gray flail is cold to the touch. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon, and it deals double damage to objects and structures.

Additionally, when you hit a creature with this weapon, you can force the creature to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature has the poisoned condition for 1 minute. The poisoned creature takes 2d4 necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Once this property is used in this way, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Sage's Signet

Ring, Varies (Requires Attunement by a Spellcaster)

This gilded ring bears a beautiful engraving and is imbued with powers of keen wisdom and foresight. While wearing this ring, you can use an action to cast the *Augury* spell from the ring. Once you use the ring to cast the spell, the ring can't cast the spell again until the next dawn.

Six varieties of *Sage's Signet* rings exist, each with a different signet (see the table below). A ring's signet determines its rarity as well as the additional spells it can cast. While wearing a *Sage's Signet*, you can cast each of its additional spells once from the ring using your Intelligence as the spellcasting ability. Once you cast each of the additional spells from the ring, it can't cast the spell again until the next dawn.

Sage's Signet

Signet	Rarity	Spells
Bear	Very rare	*Enlarge/Reduce, Polymorph*
Hart	Very rare	*Aura of Vitality, Mass Cure Wounds*
Lion	Very rare	*Destructive Wave, Fireball*
Serpent	Rare	*Fear, Hex*
Songbird	Rare	*Charm Person, Hypnotic Pattern*
Wolf	Very rare	*Freedom of Movement, Pass without Trace*

Skull Helm

Wondrous Item, Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

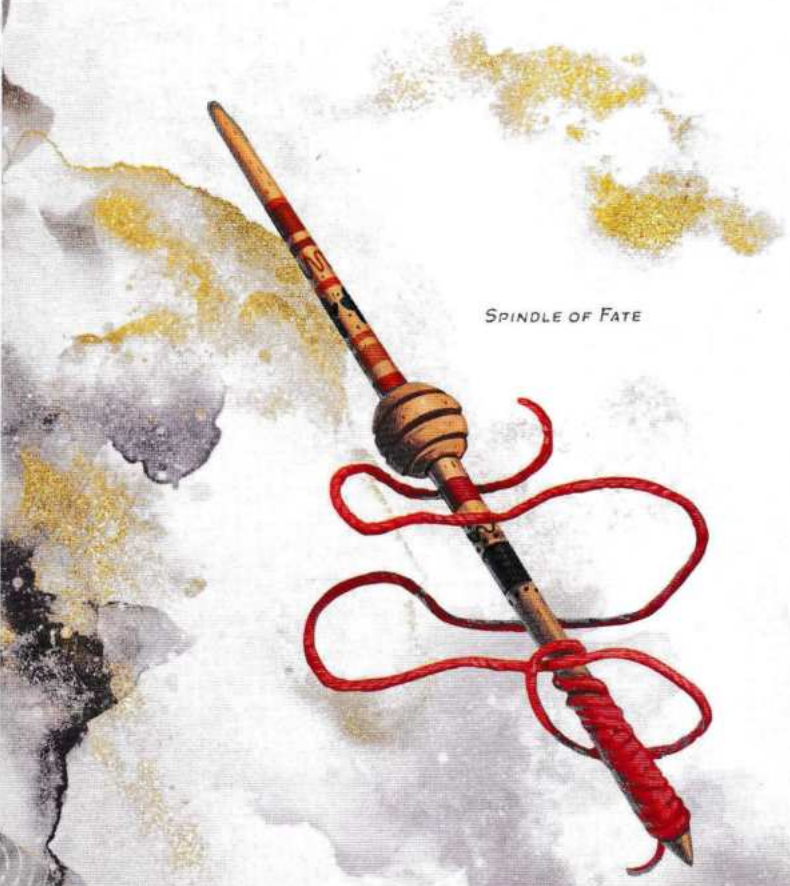
While wearing this skull-shaped helm, you have resistance to cold, poison, and necrotic damage.

Additionally, while wearing the helm, you can cast *Spirit of Death* (see chapter 7) from it without requiring material components. Once you use the helm to cast the spell, the helm can't cast this spell again until the next dawn.

Spindle of Fate

Wand, Legendary (Requires Attunement)

This wand is shaped like a drop spindle wrapped in red thread. The wand has 6 charges that can be used for the following properties:



Spindle of Fate

Battle Foreknowledge. When you roll initiative, you can expend 1 charge to add or subtract your proficiency bonus from the total roll.

Doom Foretold. As an action, you can expend 2 charges to target a creature within 30 feet of yourself and invoke that creature's doom. While the target is on the same plane of existence as you, you can sense the direction to its location, and you know the direction of its movement if it's in motion. Additionally, once per turn when you deal damage to the doomed creature, you can roll 1d6 and add the number rolled to the damage roll. These benefits persist for 1 hour or until you target another creature with this effect.

Twist of Fate. When a creature within 60 feet of you makes a saving throw or an attack roll, you can use your reaction to expend 3 charges and alter the outcome, turning a failed saving throw into a successful one, a missed attack roll into a hit, or vice versa.

The wand regains 1d6 expended charges daily at dawn.

Starshot Crossbow

Weapon (Any Crossbow), Rare (Requires Attunement)

This crossbow is crafted from blackened wood, and its limbs bear pearl inlays depicting constellations. You ignore the loading property with this crossbow. If you load no ammunition in the weapon, it produces its own, automatically creating one piece of magic ammunition when you make a ranged attack with it. The ammunition created by the weapon vanishes the instant after it hits or misses a target. The crossbow has 3 charges and regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Constellations. The crossbow is decorated with three constellations. As a bonus action, you can tap one of the constellations to invoke it, expending 1 charge and producing one of the following effects:

Balance. The next time you hit a creature with a ranged attack roll using this crossbow before the end of your next turn, you or another creature of your choice within 30 feet of you can regain hit points equal to 1d8 plus your proficiency bonus.

Flames. Until the end of your next turn, when you hit a creature with a ranged attack roll using this crossbow, the attack deals an additional 2d8 fire damage.

Rogue. Until the end of your next turn, you have the invisible condition, and anything you are wearing or carrying is also invisible.

Sun Staff

Staff, Rare (Requires Attunement by a Cleric, Druid, or Wizard)

Veins of sunstone run through this wooden staff. This staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. When you hit with an attack roll using this staff, the target takes an extra 1d8 fire damage.

Solar Focus. You can use the staff as a spellcasting focus. While holding the staff, you can reroll a number of damage dice up to your proficiency bonus when you use a spell slot to cast a spell that deals fire or radiant damage. You must use the new rolls. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Sunny Glow. As a bonus action, you can cause the staff to glow with sunlight. While glowing, the staff sheds bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet. The light lasts until you use another bonus action to extinguish it.

Voidwalker Armor

Armor (Studded Leather), Rare (Requires Attunement)

This black studded leather armor bears a red sheen. While wearing this armor, you can use a bonus action to summon a projection of yourself in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of yourself. The projection is a translucent copy of you that has immunity to all damage and conditions, and you can make attacks and cast spells with a range other than self as if standing in the projection's space. The projection disappears at the end of your turn. Once you use this bonus action, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Curse. This armor is cursed, and attuning to it extends the curse to you. As long as you remain cursed, you're unwilling to part with the armor. Taking it off fails to end the curse. While cursed in this way, you feel disconnected from your body, continuously hearing whispers that call for you to join them. Whenever you finish a long rest while cursed, you must make a DC 11 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, your soul is drawn from your body and trapped in an object on a different plane of existence. The object and location of this object are chosen by the DM (but might be the House of Cards; see chapter 18). While your soul is trapped in this way, your body is inert and doesn't age or require sustenance. Destroying the object frees your soul; otherwise, only a *Wish* spell can restore your soul to your body.

Warrior's Passkey

Warrior's Passkey

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

This silver skeleton key is warm to the touch. While holding the key in its key form, you can use an action to cast the *Knock* spell from the key.

Transforming the Key. While holding the key, you can use a bonus action to transform it into a magic longsword. You are considered proficient with the sword, and you have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. On a hit, the sword deals 1d10 force damage. The item remains in its sword form until it leaves your grasp or you use another bonus action to revert it to its key form.

If you end your attunement to the item while it's in its sword form, it automatically reverts to its key form.

Weapon of Throne's Command

Weapon (Any Martial Weapon), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This weapon is bedecked in ornate gold filigree and deep-blue and maroon jewels. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. Additionally, you gain proficiency in the Intimidation and Persuasion skills if you don't already have it.

Spellcasting. The weapon has 5 charges. You can use a bonus action and expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells (save DC 16): *Command* (1 charge), *Zone of Truth* (2 charges), *Compulsion* (4 charges), *Banishment* (4 charges), or *Dominate Person* (5 charges).

The weapon regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn.

CHAPTER 6

ROGUE

The Rogue card embodies betrayal and hidden threats. This chapter includes magic card decks geared toward resourceful, subtle, and skill-focused characters, as well as character creation ideas inspired by the Rogue card. Then, this chapter presents tools and advice to adjudicate what happens when a character draws the Rogue card, including advice on how the villain enters the story, suggestions for their motivations, and a rogues' gallery of stat blocks that can represent this antagonist.

Magic Card Decks

The following decks are presented in alphabetical order.

Card Sharp's Deck

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

The cards of this deck shimmer around the edges. While holding this deck, you can use the following properties:

Deadly Deal. As an action, you can use this deck to make a ranged spell attack by throwing a spectral card and using Dexterity for the attack roll. The card has a range of 120 feet and deals 1d8 force damage on a hit.

Spray of Cards. As an action, you can shuffle the deck and cast the *Spray of Cards* spell at 3rd level from the deck (spell save DC 15; this spell is described in chapter 7). Once the deck has cast the spell, it can't cast the spell again until the next dawn.

Deck of Dimensions

Wondrous Item, Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

The backs of the cards in this deck are decorated with intricate designs representing different planes of existence. The deck has 6 charges. While holding it, you can expend 1 or more of its charges to use the following properties:

Marked Card. As a bonus action, you can expend 1 charge to draw a card from the deck and place it in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you. The card then becomes marked with an invisible sigil. Once within the next 24 hours, as an action, you can speak the marked card's name and teleport to the card's location, along with any equipment you are wearing or carrying, appearing in the closest unoccupied space to the card. After you teleport in this way, or after 8 hours, the card returns to the deck, and the mark on it fades.

Riffling Portal. As an action, you can expend 3 charges to cast the *Arcane Gate* spell from the deck. The deck vanishes, and fluttering cards create the spell's portal rings. When the spell ends, the deck reappears in your possession.

Shuffling Stride. As a bonus action, you can expend 1 charge to throw a card from the deck to an unoccupied space within 60 feet of yourself and teleport, along with any equipment you're wearing or carrying, to that space. The card then vanishes and returns to the deck.

The deck regains 1d6 expended charges daily at dawn.

Deck of Miscellany

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

This wooden box contains a set of thirty-two parchment cards.

Deck of Miscellany

Card	Item
3 ♦	Wooden abacus
4 ♦	Four vials of perfume
5 ♦	5 days' worth of rations
6 ♦	Iron pot
7 ♦	Disguise kit
8 ♦	Window (up to 5 feet wide and 5 feet high), which you can place on a vertical surface up to 5 feet thick and which allows you to look through the surface
9 ♦	Manacles
10 ♦	Ten sheets of parchment
3 ♥	Three daggers
4 ♥	Four flasks of oil
5 ♥	Five silk robes
6 ♥	Forgery kit
7 ♥	Quarterstaff
8 ♥	Fishing tackle
9 ♥	Leather pouch containing 18 gp
10 ♥	10 crossbow bolts
3 ♣	Three books, written in Common, about random historical events
4 ♣	Canvas tent
5 ♣	50 feet of coiled silk rope
6 ♣	Two crowbars
7 ♣	Healer's kit
8 ♣	Eight gems worth 5 gp each
9 ♣	Lamp
10 ♣	10 feet of iron chain
3 ♠	Three spears
4 ♠	Steel mirror
5 ♠	15-foot wooden pole
6 ♠	Burlap sack
7 ♠	Two sets of fine clothes
8 ♠	Shovel
9 ♠	Light hammer
10 ♠	Ten arrows

The face of each card bears an illustration of a different item or set of items. As an action, you can draw a card of your choice from the deck and throw it to the ground in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of yourself. When the card hits the ground, the card permanently transforms into the item or set of items depicted on its face. An altered deck of real-world playing cards can simulate the deck, as shown on the Deck of Miscellany table.

Deck of Wild Cards

Wondrous Item, Very Rare

This deck of heavy vellum cards hums with the magic of the Elemental Chaos.

The magic of the deck functions only if cards are drawn at random (a deck of real-world playing cards can simulate the deck). As an action, you can draw a random card from this deck and throw it to make a ranged spell attack, using Dexterity for the attack roll. The card has a range of 30 feet. On a hit, it deals 1d4 slashing damage and imposes a magical effect determined by its suit, as detailed in the Deck of Wild Cards table. The card immediately returns to the deck after it hits or misses a target.

Deck of Dimensions

Deck of Wild Cards

d4	Suit	Effect
1	♣ (Rods)	The card explodes in a burst of fire. The target and each creature within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d8 fire damage.
2	♦ (Coins)	The card shoots streaks of lightning. The target must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target has the blinded condition until the end of your next turn, and each creature within 10 feet of the target takes 1d6 lightning damage.
3	♥ (Cups)	The card covers the target in a thick layer of ice. The target takes 1d10 cold damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have the restrained condition until the end of your next turn.
4	♠ (Swords)	The card unleashes a sharp, concussive blast. The target and each creature within 5 feet of it take 1d6 force damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or have the prone condition.

Heroes of Destiny

The Rogue Destinies table provides narrative ideas inspired by the *Deck of Many Things* that players can use as prompts while developing characters. The entries in this table are geared toward characters who rely on cunning, skills, and versatility, but any character's story can benefit from the ideas presented here. When using this table to help shape your character's story, you can either choose entries that speak to you or randomly pull cards from *The Deck of Many Things* card set until you feel your character's story is complete.

The prompts in the table include personality traits, relationships, and events. Most describe your character's past, but some foretell something in your character's future instead. These events might be a mystery to your character, shared only between you and your DM, or perhaps your character learned about these events through omens or a reading from a fortune teller.

> Your destiny doesn't determine your story's outcome. Consider it more like a ... loose guideline.

Rogue Destinies

Card	Heroic Tie
Balance	Your family is connected to an organization that seeks justice and opposes tyranny.
Comet	A powerful member of a thieves' guild or spy network opposes you at every turn.
Donjon	Someone important to you is imprisoned, but you believe they're innocent.
Euryale	You committed a terrible trespass and have a bounty on your head.
Fates	An important individual owes you a favor; what did you do to earn it?
Flames	A Fiend threatens someone dear to you.
Fool	Your friend since childhood is optimistic to a fault and often conned or exploited.
Gem	Someone searches for the same treasure you do, and disaster will strike if they find it first.
Jester	Hardships bring out your optimism—which is lucky, since you seem to attract unfortunate events!
Key	You've had an unexpected crisis. Did you solve it quickly, or did you hesitate and risk doom?
Knight	An ally who is a member of a helpful organization passes you information or exerts influence on your behalf in subtle ways.
Moon	Your life is an idyllic story, except for something that makes you wonder if any of it is true.
Puzzle	You have part of a riddle that leads to a great treasure or momentous secret.
Rogue	Someone important to you isn't who you think they are.
Ruin	You lived a life of luxury until someone in power took it away. Will you get revenge?
Sage	A mage or magical creature takes an interest in you, offering you advice—for a price.
Skull	You've defied certain death so many times that it doesn't seem like coincidence anymore.
Star	You overcame a hardship imposed by your life circumstances, transforming your position entirely or turning the situation to your benefit.
Sun	A divine spellcaster or divine emissary provides you with guidance, whether you want it or not.
Talons	A precious object was stolen from you.
Throne	You are secretly the heir to great power, but those who usurped that power want you dead.
Void	Someone you care for is lost; although others have written them off, you believe they're still alive somewhere.

Four villains play a game for mysterious stakes.

Rogues' Gallery

When a character draws the Rogue card, a new villain's presence—if not their identity—is revealed to the characters. Who is this villain, and why are they an enemy? Here are a few options for how a Rogue villain can enter your campaign:

Impostor. An acquaintance isn't who they appear to be. This nefarious individual might be using an assumed identity, or the villain could be a shape-shifting monster or possessed by a malevolent spirit. The person the characters thought they knew might never have existed, or that person might've been killed or abducted.

New Arrival. A person the adventurers have never met enters the story as an antagonist, with a motivation that sets them against the character who drew the card. This villain is new to the characters and might even have been created by the reality-altering power of the deck.

Turncoat. The villain is someone the characters know and have had positive dealings with. The villain's attitude toward the character who drew the card changes, either because of a revelation the villain receives about the character or because the deck reshuffles reality to spin the character's actions into something harmful.

The Rogue card's magic might provide a glimpse of the future, but it can also manipulate reality in large or small ways. If the character who drew the card has a secret or has performed some action that would turn a friend into an enemy, the deck might ensure an ally gets that information, turning the ally against the character. Alternatively, the deck might change reality so that a bandit leader the character arrested suddenly has a cousin seeking revenge, or the spirit of a wicked cultist the character slew returns to torment the character by possessing a dear friend.

The Rogue's Motivation

Why does this new villain oppose the character who drew the Rogue card? This question is just as important as who the villain is. The Villainous Motivations table offers sample goals for your new villain.

Villainous Motivations

d6	Motivation
1	Eliminate the character and take their place.
2	Use the character as the key to unlocking immense power, perhaps as a ritual sacrifice.
3	Claim a treasure from the character, or take the character's wealth and holdings for themself.
4	Avenge a harm caused by the character or someone the character represents.
5	Prove their superiority by bringing the character to ruin in a public and inescapable fashion.
6	Use the character to solve a great mystery and then claim credit.

Rogue Stat Blocks

This section offers four stat block options for the antagonist created when the Rogue card is drawn. Each is a legendary creature. These stat blocks can represent a new NPC that enters the story, an existing NPC who reveals their true identity, or someone transformed into an enemy by the deck's magic.

Each stat block represents an appropriate antagonist for campaign arcs in a particular tier of play. You can change the creature type and other features of these stat blocks to customize the antagonists for your campaign. For example, you could change the veiled presence's creature type to Humanoid and frame this villain's fantastical abilities as arising from powerful treasures the villain has amassed. Alternatively, you could make this villain a Fiend, change the damage dealt to necrotic, and give the villain a frightful aspect rather than a theme of divine judgment. Descriptions of these sample villains are below.

Ambitious Assassin

Appropriate for tier 1 play (levels 1 to 4), the ambitious assassin is a Humanoid who might be a charming manipulator or a ruthless killer.

Enchanting Infiltrator

An antagonist for tier 2 play (levels 5 to 10), the enchanting infiltrator is a Fey that beguiles and misdirects.

Otherworldly Corrupter

A challenge for tier 3 play (levels 11 to 16), the otherworldly corrupter is a horrific Aberration that infects or impersonates a host.

Veiled Presence

The ultimate threat created by the Rogue card, the veiled presence is a Celestial for tier 4 play (levels 17 to 20). This being descends from an Outer Plane to bring cosmic wrath upon the characters.

The Rogue's Lair

This villain resides in a place of power and safety, whether that's a hidden thieves' guildhall or a lavish manse. The lair is filled with clever defenses to disorient, weaken, and kill intruders.

The villain's challenge rating increases while the villain is in this lair:

Ambitious Assassin. Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)
Enchanting Infiltrator. Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)
Otherworldly Corrupter. Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)
Veiled Presence. Challenge 22 (41,000 XP)

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties) while in its lair, the villain can take one of the following lair actions; the villain can't take the same lair action two rounds in a row:

Distraction. A shrill sound fills the lair. Creatures that can hear it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or lose concentration.

Snares. Hidden snares target up to three creatures the villain can see in the lair. Each creature must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or have the grappled condition (escape DC 15) and the restrained condition until it escapes or the snare holding it is destroyed. Each snare has AC 11, 10 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Traps. Traps target up to two creatures the villain can see in the lair. Each target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be struck by a trap. The villain rolls a number of d6s equal to its proficiency bonus, and struck targets take damage equal to the total. The damage is bludgeoning, piercing, slashing, fire, or poison, chosen by the villain when the villain uses this action.

Regional Effects

The region containing a villain's lair is warped by their presence, creating one or more of the following effects:

Corruption Abounds. While within 3 miles of the lair, creatures that aren't members of the villain's organization have disadvantage on ability checks that rely on the Insight, Perception, and Persuasion skills.

Potent Toxins. When members of the villain's organization deal poison damage while within 3 miles of the lair, they ignore the target's resistance to poison damage.

If the villain dies, these effects fade over the course of 1d10 days.

Wax earplugs are essential adventuring equipment, in my opinion. Chasing villains through a rowdy city? Solved. Faced with whispering, beguiling enchantments? Solved. Desperate for some peace and quiet in a busy tavern? Solved.

Ambitious Assassin

Small or Medium Humanoid, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +7
Skills Deception +9, Perception +5, Stealth +10
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, thieves' cant, plus any one language
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the assassin fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The assassin makes two Poison Blade attacks.

Poison Blade. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker the assassin can see hits the assassin with an attack, the assassin halves the attack's damage against it.

Legendary Actions

The assassin can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The assassin regains all spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cunning. The assassin escapes nonmagical restraints and ends the grappled condition on itself, then moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.
Stab (Costs 2 Actions). The assassin makes one Poison Blade attack.
Vanishing Escape (Costs 3 Actions). The assassin creates a sudden distraction, such as a cloud of disorienting smoke or flash of dazzling light, filling a 10-foot cube within 5 feet of the assassin. Each creature of the assassin's choice in that area takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage, and the assassin has the invisible condition. This invisibility lasts until the end of the assassin's next turn.

Enchanting Infiltrator

Small or Medium Fey, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 18 (Veiled Presence)
Hit Points 156 (24d8 + 48)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Int +9
Skills Deception +12, Perception +7, Stealth +13
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, thieves' cant, plus any one language
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the infiltrator fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Veiled Presence. The infiltrator's AC includes its Wisdom modifier, and the infiltrator can't be targeted by divination magic or features that would read its mind or determine its creature type.

Actions

Multiattack. The infiltrator makes two Poison Blade attacks and can use Beguiling Whisper.

Poison Blade. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 5) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) poison damage.

Beguiling Whisper. The infiltrator magically whispers to a creature it can see within 30 feet of itself. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or have the stunned condition due to fear or delight (the infiltrator's choice) until the end of the target's next turn, after which the target is immune to this Beguiling Whisper for 24 hours.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker the infiltrator can see hits the infiltrator with an attack, the infiltrator halves the attack's damage against it.

Legendary Actions

The infiltrator can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The infiltrator regains all spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cunning. The infiltrator escapes nonmagical restraints and ends the grappled condition on itself, then moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Stab (Costs 2 Actions). The infiltrator makes one Poison Blade attack.

Misdirecting Escape (Costs 3 Actions). The infiltrator magically has the invisible condition and creates an illusory duplicate of itself in its space, then teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, to an unoccupied space within 15 feet of itself. The image flings illusory blades at two creatures of the infiltrator's choice within 20 feet of the image. Each target must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The invisibility lasts until the end of the infiltrator's next turn.

Otherworldly Corrupter

Small or Medium Aberration, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 217 (29d8 + 87)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +12
Skills Perception +10, Stealth +18
Damage Resistances psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Common, thieves' cant, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Alien Mind. Magic and other features can't determine the corrupter's creature type. If a creature tries to read the corrupter's thoughts, that creature must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or have the stunned condition for 1 minute. The stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the corrupter fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Spider Climb. The corrupter can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Actions

Multiattack. The corrupter makes three Whispering Blade attacks and can use Debilitating Touch.

Whispering Blade. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) psychic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be unable to speak until the start of the corrupter's next turn.

Debilitating Touch. The corrupter's squirming tentacle lashes out at a creature the corrupter can see within 30 feet of itself. The target must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or have the paralyzed condition until the end of its next turn, after which the target is immune to this Debilitating Touch for 24 hours.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The corrupter magically transforms into any creature that is Small or Medium, while retaining its game statistics (other than its size). This transformation ends if the corrupter is reduced to 0 hit points or uses a bonus action to end it.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker the corrupter can see hits the corrupter with an attack, the corrupter halves the attack's damage against it.

Legendary Actions

The corrupter can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The corrupter regains all spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cunning. The corrupter escapes nonmagical restraints and ends the grappled and restrained conditions on itself, then moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Stab (Costs 2 Actions). The corrupter makes one Whispering Blade attack.

Amorphous Escape (Costs 3 Actions). The corrupter dissolves into a shifting mass of flesh, tentacles, eyes, claws, and mouths. Up to two creatures the corrupter can see within 20 feet of itself must make a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. This transformation lasts until the end of the corrupter's next turn. While transformed, the corrupter has advantage on attack rolls, attack rolls made against it have disadvantage, and it can move through spaces at least 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Veiled Presence

Small or Medium Celestial, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 300 (40d8 + 120)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	24 (+7)	16 (+3)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Int +14
Skills Perception +12, Stealth +21
Damage Resistances radiant, necrotic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses truesight 30 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages all
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Inviolate Presence. The veiled presence can't be targeted by divination magic or by features that would read its mind or determine its creature type.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the veiled presence fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The veiled presence makes two Blade of Judgment attacks and can use Revelation.

Blade of Judgment. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d6 + 7) piercing damage plus 27 (6d8) radiant damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 22 Charisma saving throw, or on its next turn, it can either move or take an action, but not both.

Revelation. The veiled presence reveals a glimpse of its otherworldly nature to a creature it can see within 30 feet of itself. The target must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or have the paralyzed condition until the end of its next turn, after which the target is immune to this Revelation for 24 hours.

Reactions

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker the veiled presence can see hits the veiled presence with an attack, the veiled presence halves the attack's damage against it.

Legendary Actions

The veiled presence can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The veiled presence regains all spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Flash Step. The veiled presence magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 40 feet to an unoccupied space that it can see.

Stab (Costs 2 Actions). The veiled presence makes one Blade of Judgment attack.

Searing Radiance (Costs 3 Actions). The veiled presence magically emanates dazzling light in a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on itself until the end of its next turn, during which time attack rolls against it have disadvantage and it has advantage on attack rolls. The sphere moves with the veiled presence. When another creature starts its turn in the light or enters the light for the first time on its turn, that creature must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

CHAPTER 7

SAGE

The Sage card represents arcane knowledge, foresight, and skill. In that vein, this chapter explores the arcane possibilities held within a deck of cards. It begins with options for arcane characters, including a feat, spells, and background ideas suggested by the deck that add arcane flavor to your character's story.

The chapter concludes with two magic items. The *Deck of Many More Things* consists of cards created by spellcasters trying to add new cards to the *Deck of Many Things*. The *Deck of Wonder* is a less powerful—and less dangerous—version of the more famous deck, appropriate for lower-level characters.

Character Options

This section contains a feat and spells for characters who combine cards and arcane magic, as well as narrative prompts to help you create your character and guide their story.

Feat: Cartomancer

Cartomancers use cards as a focus for arcane power. Talk to your DM to see if this feat is available for you in your campaign.

Cartomancer

Prerequisite: 4th Level, Spellcasting Feature

You have learned to channel your magic through a deck of cards. You can use a card deck as your spellcasting focus, and you gain the following benefits:

Card Tricks. You learn the *Prestidigitation* cantrip and can use it to create illusions that duplicate the effects of stage magic. When you use *Prestidigitation* in this way, you can conceal the verbal and somatic components of the spell as ordinary conversation and card handling.

Hidden Ace. When you finish a long rest, you can choose one spell from your class's spell list and imbue that spell into a card. The chosen spell must have a casting time of 1 action, and it must be a level for which you have spell slots. The card remains imbued with this spell for 8 hours. While the card is imbued with the spell, you can use a bonus action to flourish the card and cast the spell within. The card then immediately loses its magic.

Spells

This section contains spells DMs can make available to characters and creatures in their campaigns. The Spells table lists these spells, ordered by level; it also notes each spell's school of magic, whether it requires concentration, whether it bears the ritual tag, and which classes have access to it.

Spells

Level	Spell	School	Conc.	Ritual	Class
2nd	*Spray of Cards*	Conjuration	No	No	Bard, sorcerer, warlock, wizard
3rd	*Antagonize*	Enchantment	No	No	Bard, sorcerer, warlock, wizard
4th	*Spirit of Death*	Necromancy	Yes	No	Sorcerer, warlock, wizard

Antagonize

3rd-Level Enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S, M (a playing card depicting a rogue)
Duration: Instantaneous

You whisper magical words that antagonize one creature of your choice within range. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 4d4 psychic damage and must immediately use its reaction to make a melee attack against another creature of your choice that you can see. If the target can't make this attack (for example, because there is no one within its reach or because its reaction is unavailable), the target instead has disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the start of your next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage only.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d4 for each slot level above 3rd.

Spirit of Death

4th-Level Necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a gilded playing card worth at least 400 gp and depicting an avatar of death)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You call forth a spirit that embodies death. The spirit manifests in an unoccupied space you can see within range and uses the reaper spirit stat block. The spirit disappears when it is reduced to 0 hit points or when the spell ends.

The spirit is an ally to you and your companions. In combat, the spirit shares your initiative count and takes its turn immediately after yours. It obeys your verbal commands (no action required by you). If you don't issue the spirit any commands, it takes the Dodge action and uses its movement to avoid danger.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, use the higher level wherever the spell's level appears in the reaper spirit stat block.

Spray of Cards

2nd-Level Conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self (15-foot cone)
Components: V, S, M (a deck of cards)
Duration: Instantaneous

You spray a 15-foot cone of spectral cards. Each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 2d10 force damage and has the blinded condition until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage only.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d10 for each slot level above 2nd.

Heroes of Destiny

The Sage Destinies table provides narrative ideas inspired by the *Deck of Many Things* that you can use while developing your character. The entries in this table are geared toward spellcasters, but they can enrich any character's story. When using this table, you can either choose the entries that speak to you or draw cards from the deck.

Reaper Spirit

Medium Undead, Neutral

Armor Class 11 + the level of the spell (natural armor)
Hit Points 40 + 10 for each spell level above 4th
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages understands the languages you speak
Challenge — **Proficiency Bonus** equals your bonus

Incorporeal Movement. The spirit can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. If it ends its turn inside an object, it is shunted to the nearest unoccupied space and takes 1d10 force damage for every 5 feet shunted.

Actions

Multiattack. The spirit makes a number of Reaping Scythe attacks equal to half the level of the spell (rounded down).

Reaping Scythe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* your spell attack modifier to hit (with advantage), reach 5 ft., the creature haunted by Haunt Creature. *Hit:* 1d8 + 3 + the spell's level necrotic damage.

Bonus Actions

Haunt Creature. The spirit targets a creature it can see within 10 feet of itself and begins haunting it. While the target is haunted, you and the spirit sense the direction and distance to the target if it is on the same plane of existence as you. Additionally, if the target starts its turn within 10 feet of the spirit, the target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or have the frightened condition until the start of the target's next turn. The target remains haunted until it dies, the spirit disappears, or the spirit uses this action again.

Sage Destinies

Card	Heroic Tie
Balance	You were once a member of an order dedicated to keeping magical artifacts out of the hands of those who would abuse their power.
Comet	A seer predicted you're destined for immense power. Do you seek this power or reject it?
Donjon	Your dreams include visions of an imprisoned extraplanar entity.
Euryale	You wish to learn powerful magic to protect your loved ones from harm.
Fates	Your magical studies are driven by a desire to manipulate reality.
Flames	Your magical ability stems from a gamble you made with a Fiend—though you're not sure if you won or lost.
Fool	You use your arcane prowess to con unsuspecting individuals.
Gem	You carry a seemingly ordinary item stolen from a powerful archmage, and it causes inexplicable things to happen around you.
Jester	You come from a long tradition of wild mages, even if your own powers are different.
Key	Your spellbook manifests as a deck of cards.
Knight	Your family of renowned warriors judges you on your martial talents (or lack thereof).
Moon	A loved one is cursed, and you're determined to break that curse.
Puzzle	You live for the pursuit of arcane secrets and lost legends.
Rogue	Someone you trust is actually a monster, such as a dragon or a hag, in disguise.
Ruin	A fortune teller warned that you're destined to cause great destruction, which you're trying to avoid.
Sage	You use a divinatory card spread to decide which spells to prepare each day.
Skull	You seek a way to cheat death.
Star	Your spells and magical abilities take on the appearance of playing cards.
Sun	Agents of the Solar Bastion (see chapter 10) once saved your life.
Talons	You seek to reclaim a stolen magical artifact.
Throne	You began your arcane scholarship as an apprentice to a court magician.
Void	You've glimpsed another plane of existence, but no one believes you. You strive to prove them wrong.

Magic Card Decks

This section presents two decks of magical cards.

Deck of Many More Things

Wondrous Item, Legendary

Over the centuries since the first *Deck of Many Things* was created, many have sought and failed to replicate it. But some have created new cards. These forty-four additional cards are known collectively as the *Deck of Many More Things*. (More information on creating new cards for this deck appears in chapter 2.)

Like the *Deck of Many Things*, the *Deck of Many More Things* manifests differently on various worlds. While it can include fewer or different cards, it frequently appears with a *Deck of Many Things* as part of a combined deck of sixty-six illuminated cards. The combined deck is usually protected by a box or pouch. The forty-four cards of the *Deck of Many More Things* bear similar imagery to those in the *Deck of Many Things* and have potent magical effects, which are detailed later in this description. Notably, cards from the *Deck of Many More Things* are more likely to be beneficial, though about a third of them are still dangerous.

Before you draw a card, you must declare how many cards you intend to draw and then draw them randomly. Unless a card allows you to draw additional cards, any cards drawn exceeding this number have no effect.

As soon as you draw a card, its magic takes effect. You must draw each card you declared no more than 1 hour after the previous draw. Unless a card states otherwise, if you fail to draw the chosen number, the remaining number of cards fly from the deck and take effect simultaneously.

Unless it is the Fool or the Jester card, a drawn card immediately takes effect, fades from existence, and reappears in the deck, making it possible to draw the same card multiple times.

The DM can use the physical cards provided in *The Deck of Many Things* card set to build a combined *Deck of Many Things* and *Deck of Many More Things*, including whichever cards they desire. Alternatively, roll on the Deck of Many More Things table below to randomly determine what cards are drawn.

Aberration. You gain telepathy within a range of 90 feet.

Beast. You immediately transform into a random Beast with a CR of 5 or lower. Your game statistics—including your ability scores, hit points, and possible actions—are replaced by the Beast's game statistics, and any nonmagical equipment you're wearing or carrying melds into your new form and can't be used. Any magic items you're carrying drop in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of your new form.

You remain transformed in this way for 2d12 days; nothing can alter your form while you're under the effects of this card, but the *Wish* spell can end the transformation early. When you revert to your normal form, you return to the same state you were in when you initially transformed.

Book. You gain the ability to speak, read, and write 1d6 + 2 languages of your choice.

Bridge. You gain the ability to cast the *Time Stop* spell 1d3 times. Use your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice).

Deck of Many More Things

d100	Card	d100	Card
01	Aberration	35	Monstrosity
02	Balance*	36	Moon*
03	Beast	37	Ooze
04	Book	38	Path
05	Bridge	39	Pit
06	Campfire	40	Plant
07	Cavern	41	Priest
08	Celestial	42	Prisoner
09	Comet*	43	Puzzle*
10	Construct	44	Ring
11	Corpse	45	Rogue*
12	Crossroads	46	Ruin*
13	Donjon*	47	Sage*
14	Door	48	Shield
15	Dragon	49	Ship
16	Elemental	50	Skull*
17	Euryale*	51	Staff
18	Expert	52	Stairway
19	Fates*	53	Star*
20	Fey	54	Statue
21	Fiend	55	Sun*
22	Flames*	56	Talons*
23	Fool*	57	Tavern
24	Gem*	58	Temple
25	Giant	59	Throne*
26	Humanoid	60	Tomb
27	Jester*	61	Tower
28	Key*	62	Tree
29	Knight*	63	Undead
30	Lance	64	Void*
31	Mage	65	Warrior
32	Map	66	Well
33	Maze	67–00	Roll again
34	Mine		

*Found in the *Deck of Many Things* as depicted in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*

Campfire. You immediately gain the benefits of finishing a long rest.

Cavern. You gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed. You also gain the ability to move up, down, across vertical surfaces, and along ceilings, while leaving your hands free.

Celestial. You sprout a pair of softly luminescent, feathered wings from your back and gain a flying speed of 30 feet.

Construct. A **homunculus** appears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you. The appearance of the homunculus is determined by the DM, and the homunculus treats you as its creator.

Corpse. You immediately drop to 0 hit points, have the unconscious condition, and must begin making death saving throws. Spells and other magical effects that restore hit points have no effect on you until you are stabilized. If you fail three death saving throws, you die and can be resurrected only by the *Wish* spell.

Crossroads. Roll a d20. If the roll is even, you age 1d10 years. If the roll is odd, you become younger by 1d10 years, to a minimum of 1 year. This effect can be undone only by the *Wish* spell, divine intervention, or similar magic.

Door. You gain the ability to cast the *Gate* spell 1d4 times, requiring no material components. Use your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice).

Dragon. A dragon egg appears at your feet and immediately hatches into a dragon wyrmling. The type of dragon is chosen by the DM. The wyrmling views you as its parent and is staunchly loyal to you and your allies.

Elemental. You become immune to one of the following damage types (choose immediately upon drawing this card): acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder.

Expert. Your Dexterity score increases by 2, to a maximum of 22.

Fey. A fey crossing opens into the Feywild, and you're immediately pulled through it, disappearing in a flash of rainbow-colored light. You draw no more cards.

The fey crossing appears as a shimmering fractal of light above the deck, and it remains open for 1 minute after the card is drawn. The precise location in the Feywild to which the fey crossing leads is determined by the DM.

Fiend. A powerful Fiend appears in a nearby unoccupied space and offers you a deal. The precise nature of this deal is up to the DM, but usually the Fiend offers some material reward in exchange for you and your allies completing a task for the Fiend. The Fiend is indifferent to you and can be bargained with; it keeps its side of any bargain it makes, though it might twist the wording of any agreement

to suit its purposes. If attacked, or if negotiations fail and you refuse the Fiend's offer, it returns to its home plane.

Giant. You immediately grow 2d10 inches in height, and your hit point maximum and current hit points both increase by 20.

Humanoid. You can immediately choose to stop drawing from the deck, regardless of how many cards you initially declared.

Lance. All your ability scores increase by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Mage. Your Intelligence score increases by 2, to a maximum of 22.

Map. At any time you choose within 1 year of drawing this card, you can mentally name or describe an object or individual that is familiar to you. You immediately know the location of the object or individual, as well as the distance between you and the object or individual, even if the object or individual is on a different plane of existence. If you named an individual, you know if they are alive and any conditions they have. If you named an object, you know if it is broken or not. If you named a magic item that has charges, you know how many charges it has remaining.

Maze. You gain 1d3 levels of exhaustion.

Mine. A pile of 2d6 gems (each worth 5,000 gp) and 1d10 chunks of precious ore (each worth 2,500 gp) appears at your feet.

Monstrosity. A Large or larger Monstrosity with a challenge rating of 10 or less (chosen by the DM) appears in an unoccupied space within 15 feet of you. The creature is hostile toward you and attacks immediately. The creature disappears when it is killed or when you are reduced to 0 hit points. If there isn't enough space for a Large or larger creature to appear, this card has no effect.

Ooze. A **gelatinous cube** immediately appears in your space and engulfs you. The gelatinous cube is hostile and remains until it is destroyed. If there isn't enough space for the gelatinous cube to appear, this card has no effect.

Path. Your walking speed increases by 10 feet.

Pit. A pit opens beneath you. You plummet 3d6 × 10 feet, take damage from the fall, and have the prone condition.

Plant. You gain the ability to cast *Speak with Plants* without using a spell slot; you must finish a long rest before you can cast it this way again. If you have spell slots of 3rd level or higher, you can cast this spell using them. Use your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice).

Priest. Your Wisdom score increases by 2, to a maximum of 22.

Prisoner. Glowing chains made of magical force appear and wrap around you. You have the restrained condition until the chains are destroyed or you are freed. While you have this condition, you can't cast spells, and any magic items you're wearing or carrying have their properties suppressed. You draw no more cards. The chains are immune to damage and can't be dispelled using the *Dispel Magic* spell or similar magic. However, a *Disintegrate* spell destroys the chains instantly, freeing you. Another creature can also free you by succeeding on a DC 30 Dexterity check using thieves' tools.

Ring. A rare or rarer magic ring appears on your finger. If you have the attunement slots available, you're automatically attuned to the ring when it appears. The DM chooses the ring.

Shield. A rare or rarer suit of magic armor that you are proficient with appears in your hands. The DM chooses the armor. If you lack proficiency with any armor, your base AC instead now equals 12 + your Dexterity modifier while you aren't wearing armor.

Ship. You gain proficiency in three skills chosen by the DM.

Staff. A rare or rarer magic rod, staff, or wand appears in your hands. The DM chooses the item.

Stairway. You can choose to either decrease your number of declared draws by two or receive a rare or rarer wondrous item, which appears in your hands. The DM chooses the item.

Statue. You immediately have the petrified condition as your body is transformed into marble. The petrification lasts until you are freed with the *Greater Restoration* spell or similar magic.

Tavern. Your Charisma score increases by 2 to a maximum of 22.

Temple. A deity or entity of similar power becomes bound to aid you. At any point in time between drawing the card and when you die, you can use your action to call on this entity for divine intervention, and the entity is bound to answer. The parameters and nature of this intervention are chosen by the DM. If you die without having used this intervention, the deity fulfills its obligation by casting the *Resurrection* spell on you. Once the entity has answered your call for divine intervention or resurrected you, the entity is no longer bound to aid you.

Tomb. At any time you choose within 1 year of drawing this card, you can cast the *True Resurrection* spell once without expending a spell slot or requiring material components. Use your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice).

Tower. Draw two additional cards beyond your declared number of draws. The magic of these cards doesn't immediately take effect; instead, choose one of the two additional cards to keep, returning the other to the deck. The magic of the card you keep takes effect immediately thereafter.

Cards from the *Deck of Many More Things*

Tree. Your skin immediately becomes rough, like tree bark. Your base AC now equals 15 + your Dexterity modifier while you aren't wearing armor, but you have vulnerability to fire damage. This transformation can be undone only by the *Wish* spell, divine intervention, or similar magic.

Undead. Somewhere on the Material Plane, a **revenant** rises. This revenant blames you for its existence and relentlessly hunts you to exact its revenge. The revenant exists until either 1 year passes, the revenant kills you, or you use a *Wish* spell to banish it permanently to the afterlife.

Warrior. Your Strength score increases by 2 to a maximum of 22.

Well. You learn three cantrips of your choice from any spell list.

Deck of Wonder

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

Created in the image of the *Deck of Many Things*, this deck of ivory or vellum cards bestows an assortment of minor benefits and penalties on those who draw from it. Most (75 percent) of these decks have only thirteen cards, but the rest have twenty-two.

Before you draw a card, you must declare how many cards you intend to draw, then draw them randomly. Any additional cards drawn have no effect. Unless a card states otherwise, as soon as you draw a card from the deck, its magic takes effect. You must draw each card you declared no more than 1 hour after the previous draw. If you fail to draw the chosen number, the remaining number of cards fly from the deck and take effect simultaneously.

Unless it is the Mystery card, a drawn card immediately takes effect, fades from existence, and reappears in the deck, making it possible to draw the same card multiple times.

You can use an altered deck of playing cards to simulate the deck, as shown in the Deck of Wonder table.

Deck of Wonder

Card	Card Title
A ♦	Chancellor*
K ♦	Day
Q ♦	Night
J ♦	Dawn
2 ♦	Dusk*
A ♥	Destiny*
K ♥	Crown
Q ♥	Lock
J ♥	Champion
2 ♥	Coin*
A ♣	Vulture*
K ♣	Chaos
Q ♣	Order
J ♣	Beginning
2 ♣	Mystery*
A ♠	Isolation*
K ♠	End
Q ♠	Monster
J ♠	Knife
2 ♠	Justice*
Joker (with ™)	Student*
Joker (without ™)	Mischief

*Found only in a deck with twenty-two cards.

Beginning. Your hit point maximum and current hit points increase by 2d10. Your hit point maximum remains increased in this way for the next 8 hours.

Champion. You gain a +1 bonus to weapon attack and damage rolls. This bonus lasts for 8 hours.

Chancellor. Within 8 hours of drawing this card, you can cast *Augury* once as an action, requiring no material components. Use your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice).

Chaos. You gain resistance to one of the following damage types (chosen by the DM): acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. This resistance lasts for 1d12 days.

Coin. Five pieces of jewelry, each worth 100 gp, or ten gemstones, each worth 50 gp, appear at your feet.

Crown. You learn the *Friends* cantrip. Use your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). If you already know this cantrip, the card has no effect.

Dawn. This card invigorates you. For the next 8 hours, you can add your proficiency bonus to your initiative rolls.

Day. You gain a +1 bonus to saving throws. This benefit lasts until you finish a long rest.

Destiny. This card protects you against an untimely demise. The first time after drawing this card that you would drop to 0 hit points from taking damage, you instead drop to 1 hit point.

Dusk. This card supernaturally saps your energy. You have disadvantage on initiative rolls. This effect lasts until you finish a long rest, but it can be ended early by a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic.

End. This card is an omen of death. You take 2d10 necrotic damage, and your hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This effect can't reduce your hit point maximum below 10 hit points. This reduction lasts until you

finish a long rest, but it can be ended early by a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic.

Isolation. You disappear, along with anything you are wearing or carrying, and become trapped in a harmless extradimensional space for 1d4 minutes. You draw no more cards. You then reappear in the space you left or the nearest unoccupied space. When you reappear, you must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or have the poisoned condition for 1 hour as your body reels from the extradimensional travel.

Justice. You momentarily gain the ability to balance the scales of fate. For the next 8 hours, whenever you or a creature within 60 feet of you is about to roll a d20 with advantage or disadvantage, you can use your reaction to prevent the roll from being affected by advantage or disadvantage.

Knife. An uncommon magic weapon you're proficient with appears in your hands. The DM chooses the weapon.

Lock. You gain the ability to cast *Knock* 1d3 times. Use your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice).

Mischief. You receive an uncommon wondrous item (chosen by the DM), or you can draw two additional cards beyond your declared draws.

Monster. This card's monstrous visage curses you. While cursed in this way, whenever you make a saving throw, you must roll 1d4 and subtract the number rolled from the total. The curse lasts until you finish a long rest, but it can be ended early with a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic.

Mystery. You have disadvantage on Intelligence saving throws for 1 hour. Discard this card and draw from the deck again; together, the two draws count as one of your declared draws.

Night. You gain darkvision within a range of 300 feet. This darkvision lasts for 8 hours.

Order. You gain resistance to one of the following damage types (chosen by the DM): force, necrotic, poison, psychic, or radiant. This resistance lasts for 1d12 days.

Student. You gain proficiency in Wisdom saving throws. If you already have this proficiency, you instead gain proficiency in Intelligence or Charisma saving throws (your choice).

Vulture. One nonmagical item or piece of equipment in your possession (chosen by the DM) disappears. The item remains nearby but concealed for a short time, so it can be found with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If the item isn't recovered within 1 hour, it disappears forever.

CHAPTER 8

FATES

A CHARACTER WHO DRAWS THE FATES CARD from a *Deck of Many Things* gains the chance to rewrite the events of their life. This card is an example in miniature of the deck, which transforms the lives of everyone who dares to draw from it. But fate and destiny are powerful concepts; when a character tries to change their destiny, they're meddling with powers usually reserved for deities. This chapter is filled with character options, treasure, and other ideas linked to the concepts of fate and destiny. It's primarily aimed at clerics, druids, and paladins who have a connection to the gods, especially gods of fate and destiny, such as the Greyhawk deity Istus, who created the original *Deck of Many Things*; Savras in the Forgotten Realms; the Dragonlance deity Gilean; and the elven deity Labelas Enorath.

The chapter begins with two backgrounds representing adventurers whose lives have gone through sudden reversals of fortune—falling from a great height or rising from tragedy. Following them is a selection of personality traits and life events inspired by the *Deck of Many Things*. These traits and events reflect the influence of fate and destiny on your character. Finally, this chapter presents a collection of magic items and supernatural gifts: charms bestowed by the gods or other great powers, inspired by the *Deck of Many Things* and the concept of fate.

BACKGROUNDS

This section presents the rewarded and the ruined backgrounds for characters whose lives have been upended by an event of great significance—whether by drawing from a *Deck of Many Things* or in some other transformative way.

REWARDED

You were living a difficult life before your destiny suddenly changed through a miraculous turn of good fortune. Perhaps a benevolent deity gave you precisely what you most desired. You might have stumbled across a *Deck of Many Things* and drawn a card with a potent, positive effect. Or maybe you inherited a modest fortune from a distant relative you didn't know you had.

Regardless, you left the daily miseries of your old life behind in favor of a life of adventure and excitement. Your old debts have been paid, responsibilities you thought inescapable are behind you, or you suddenly possess rare and unusual skills unknown to ordinary folk.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Persuasion
Languages: One of your choice
Tool Proficiencies: One gaming set of your choice (such as playing cards or three-dragon ante cards)
Equipment: A bottle of black ink, an ink pen, five sheets of paper, a gaming set (matching your chosen proficiency), a signet ring, a set of fine clothes, and a pouch containing 18 gp

FEATURE: FORTUNE'S FAVOR

Your unexpected good fortune is reflected by a minor boon. You gain the Lucky, Magic Initiate, or Skilled feat (your choice). Your choice of feat reflects

A CHARACTER WITH THE REWARDED BACKGROUND GETS SURPRISING GOOD NEWS.

the transformation that changed your life. An encounter with a genie who gave you three wishes might have resulted in magical powers represented by Magic Initiate. If you paid off all your family debts with a fortuitous round of three-dragon ante, you might be Lucky instead. Alternatively, you could use the Skilled feat to reflect whatever trial you endured to secure your new destiny and to model the knowledge and abilities imparted to you by whatever force transformed your life.

Building a Rewarded Character

Rewarded characters have varied histories, but they have one thing in common: they were down on their luck before their lives abruptly turned around. They might have given up all hope of a happier life, only to suddenly get a second chance. A rewarded character has often spent many years struggling to escape painful circumstances. Now, extricated from the (sometimes literal) prison that was their former life, they throw their cares to the wind and become adventurers.

If your character's life was changed by a *Deck of Many Things*, consider which card was responsible. Perhaps the Fates card undid a tragic mistake your character made in their youth. The Gem card could have wiped out debts incurred over a lifetime. Maybe the Sage card provided the advice needed to escape a hopeless situation, the Star card increased an ability score to its current value, or a *Wish* spell cast after drawing the Moon card transformed your character from a peddler to a fledgling sorcerer infused with magic and new knowledge and skills. If you're making a character at higher than 1st level, magic items they have could have been granted by the Key or Sun card.

Suggested Characteristics. Your character's perspective on life has changed thanks to their new destiny. The Rewarded Personality Traits table suggests traits you might adopt for your character and cards from the *Deck of Many Things* that might have prompted this trait.

Rewarded Personality Traits

d6	Personality Trait
1	A safe home is a foundation on which anything else can be built. (Key, Throne)
2	I was elevated to heights I could never otherwise attain, and I won't waste my fortune. (Star, Sun)
3	I try to be a source of inspiration and joy to others. Life is never as bad as you think! (Euryale, Jester)
4	Courage and boldness can carry the day when all else fails. (Comet, Knight)
5	My good fortune means I can lift others up as well. (Gem, Moon)
6	Having the right answers is the first step to solving any problem, no matter how dire. (Fates, Sage)

Rewarded Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Rewarded Trinkets table instead of on the Trinkets table in the *Player's Handbook* for your starting trinket.

Rewarded Trinkets

d6	Trinket
1	A perfumed silk scarf from an admirer
2	A crystal bead that glows like a candle in the dark
3	A letter of introduction and invitation from an influential person in a far-off city
4	A motto or symbol whose meaning eludes you, etched on a piece of your equipment
5	A crisp playing card that never seems to tear or soil, depicting the card that affected you
6	Half a medallion designed to be rejoined to its other half

Ruined

Everything was going so well! You had a life of luxury, love, and comfort when you suddenly lost it all. Perhaps you were framed for crimes you didn't commit and lost your reputation, fortune, and career. Maybe a rampaging dragon or another monster

wiped out everything you had in a single calamitous afternoon. Or you might have sought out a *Deck of Many Things*, hoping to make your successful life even more glorious—only to draw a destructive card that changed your destiny forever.

Your desperation has driven you to the career of adventurer. You don't seek out dark dungeons and their monstrous inhabitants for excitement and glory; you do it because every other path is closed to you. But you have risen high on fortune's wheel once before, and with luck and fortitude, you could do so again.

Skill Proficiencies: Stealth, Survival
Languages: One of your choice
Tool Proficiencies: One gaming set of your choice (such as playing cards or three-dragon ante cards)
Equipment: A cracked hourglass, a set of rusty manacles, a half-empty bottle, a hunting trap, a gaming set (matching your chosen proficiency), a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 13 gp

Feature: Still Standing

You have weathered ruinous misfortune, and you possess hidden reserves others don't expect. You gain the Alert, Skilled, or Tough feat (your choice). Your choice of feat reflects how you've dealt with the terrible loss that changed your life forever. If you've kept your senses sharp for every opportunity and climbed your way out of misery by seizing the tiniest scrap of hope, choose Alert. If you've redoubled your efforts to reclaim what was once yours, choose Skilled. If you've stoically persevered through your misfortune, select Tough.

Building a Ruined Character

Ruined characters were on top of the world before misfortune struck. Many were wealthy. Others come from modest backgrounds, but they were surrounded by friends, family, and loved ones. They might have been famous, or simply never encountered serious hardship before. Some were born to privilege or rose to prominence through trickery or a false reputation. Now a *Deck of Many Things*—or another calamity—has knocked them down like a house of cards.

If your character's life was ruined by a *Deck of Many Things*, consider which card was responsible. Perhaps your character was imprisoned for years by the Donjon or Void card, and now everyone they knew has died. Maybe your character drew the Rogue card, and the person closest to them—a spouse, child, or parent—turned against them. A devil unleashed by the Flames card might have destroyed their life. The Ruin or Talons card might have stolen the character's material goods or saddled them with vast debt.

Suggested Characteristics. Rising above misfortune shapes one's perspective. The Ruined Personality Traits table suggests traits you might adopt for your character (and ruinous cards that might have prompted this trait).

Ruined Personality Traits

d6	Personality Trait
1	I've changed from my past, and I work to live up to my new path. (Balance, Throne)
2	Every moment is a gift I refuse to squander. (Euryale, Skull)
3	Now that I've overcome having nothing, I can survive anything. (Fool, Ruin, Talons)
4	I know enemies are set against me, and I always prepare for the worst. (Flames, Rogue)
5	I interpret every event as part of a larger pattern I just haven't worked out yet. (Puzzle, Star)
6	I must make up for so much time I've already lost. (Donjon, Void)

Ruined Trinkets. When you make your character, you can roll once on the Ruined Trinkets table instead of on the Trinkets table in the *Player's Handbook*.

Characters with the Ruined background have endured great hardship.

Ruined Trinkets

d6	Trinket
1	A rusted scrap of a once-beloved family heirloom
2	A land deed, but all the names and markings that once tied it to you have faded into obscurity
3	A bauble once imbued with powerful magic
4	A battered playing card with a hole pierced in it, its face depicting the card that affected you
5	A yellowed Humanoid tooth that whispers eerily when placed under a pillow
6	A keepsake from someone you were once close to but who is now your enemy

Heroes of Destiny

The Fated Destinies table provides narrative ideas inspired by the *Deck of Many Things* that you can use as prompts while developing your character. The entries are geared toward characters who rely on faith, conviction, or fate—particularly clerics, druids, and paladins—but any character's story can benefit from them. When using this table, you can choose the entries that speak to you or randomly pull cards from *The Deck of Many Things* card set.

The prompts can be personality traits, relationships, or events. Most are described as part of your character's past, but they might foretell events in

Fated Destinies

Card	Heroic Tie
Balance	You were trained by an organization that opposes a deity or another powerful cosmic force.
Comet	You were born under a sign associated with cataclysm, and every attempt to glimpse your future reveals ill omens.
Donjon	A religious organization imprisoned you, perhaps because of a crime you committed against that faith or because the leaders considered you the servant of a rival power.
Euryale	You or your family are watched by secretive figures. They usually keep hidden, but you've seen they wear an unknown symbol.
Fates	You made a choice in your past that haunts you. Whatever the consequences, it's not clear you made the right choice.
Flames	A powerful figure opposed to your beliefs vexes your life; even your triumphs seem to serve this being's ends.
Fool	What could have been one of the happiest moments in your life turned into a tragedy.
Gem	You inherited land containing the ruins of a temple where a coveted relic was hidden.
Jester	You were brought up to believe in a prophecy of impending doom, but you perceive potential and hope where others expect disaster.
Key	An inflexible person with power over you threatened to bring about disaster, but your decisive action prevailed.
Knight	The defenders of a religious organization such as a druid circle, paladin order, or temple watch over you.
Moon	You are most comfortable at night, and all your greatest successes have taken place then. You also bear a silvery, crescent-shaped birthmark.
Puzzle	Your studies led you to a scrap of prophecy or the memoir of a prominent figure, which calls your beliefs into question.
Rogue	A devout individual whom you looked up to revealed themself to be false, a disciple of a power opposed to your beliefs.
Ruin	You were once a favored adherent of a religious order, but you've been cast out in disgrace.
Sage	An otherworldly being whispers advice to you in dreams or visitations, taking on different guises and speaking through others.
Skull	You were returned to life through resurrection magic, divine intervention, or a mysterious circumstance you don't yet understand.
Star	When you adopted your current beliefs, your life changed dramatically for the better.
Sun	While you never placed much stock in the beliefs you were taught, adhering to them saved you from a catastrophe.
Talons	You have a well-used holy symbol from someone you looked up to, and you feel uncertain anytime you're without it.
Throne	You were born to a family of divinely favored folk, and they have big expectations for you.
Void	Your soul, or a loved one's, is doomed to be taken by a Fiend, a powerful Undead, or another wicked power.

your character's future. Consider how much your character knows about the destinies detailed in the table; these events might be a mystery to your character, shared only between you and your DM. Or perhaps your character learned about these events through omens or the readings of a fortune teller.

Treasures

The following section presents magic items and supernatural gifts that resonate with the cosmic forces of fate and destiny.

Magic Items

This section presents magic items in alphabetical order.

Deck of Oracles

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

The illustrations on this deck of oracle cards move or change subtly when viewed indirectly. When you finish a long rest, you can spend 10 minutes consulting the cards for an omen of the coming day. Roll a d20 and record the number rolled. Once in the next 8 hours, immediately after a creature within 60 feet of you makes an ability check, an attack roll, or a saving throw, you can use your reaction to discard the d20 roll; the creature must use the number you rolled in place of its roll.

Additionally, while holding the cards, you can cast *Divination* from them. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Fate Cutter Shears

Weapon (Dagger), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

The blades of these pruning shears bear many nicks and dents but still cut cleanly. The shears function as a magic dagger. The weapon has the following properties:

Ever Sharp. When you hit with an attack using the shears, the target takes an extra 1d6 force damage.

Sever Threads. When you hit a creature with the shears, you can cut that creature's fate. Until the target finishes a long rest, attack rolls against it score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 on the d20. One this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Fate Dealer's Deck, +1, +2, or +3

Wondrous Item, Rare (+1), Very Rare (+2), Legendary (+3) (Requires Attunement by a Cleric or Paladin)

The backs of these cards are inscribed with glyphs representing the Inner Planes, the Outer Planes, or the holy symbols of various deities. While holding this deck, you can use it as a spellcasting focus, and you gain a bonus to spell attack rolls and to your spell save DC. The bonus is determined by the deck's rarity.

Fate Dealer's Deck

In addition, while you're holding the deck, you can draw a card as an action to expend and roll one of your Hit Dice and add the deck's bonus to the number rolled. One creature you can see within 30 feet of you either takes radiant damage or regains hit points (your choice) equal to the total.

House of Cards

Wondrous Item, Uncommon

This deck of cards is decorated with geometric shapes that have a protective motif. While you're holding the deck, you can use an action to shuffle it and cause the cards to deal themselves out and transform into a shelter made of cards. The shelter can be shaped however you desire, but it must fit in a 40-foot cube centered on a point within 30 feet of you. The shelter has one door and up to four windows, and only you can open or close them. It has a floor and a roof, and it maintains a comfortable temperature inside.

The shelter has AC 15, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The shelter lasts for 24 hours, until you dismiss it as an action, or until it is reduced to 0 hit points. When the shelter's

duration ends, it transforms back into a deck of cards and appears in your hand. Once the deck has transformed into a shelter, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Supernatural Gifts

This section presents magical charms inspired by the *Deck of Many Things*. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on charms.

Charm of Balance

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

When a creature you can see within 60 feet of you damages you, you can use your reaction to deal an amount of force damage to that creature equal to half the damage you took. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of Euryale

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As an action, you can unleash a petrifying wave of magic from your eyes in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature has the petrified condition for 1 hour. On a successful save, a creature is partially turned to stone and has the restrained condition. A restrained creature can repeat the save at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Once you use this charm, it vanishes from you.

Charm of Many Things

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You are infused with a burst of magic from a *Deck of Many Things*. As an action, you can touch a willing creature other than yourself and bestow the effect of a single randomly determined card from the deck upon the target. Once you use this charm, it vanishes from you.

Charm of Ruin

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As an action, you can touch a nonmagical object, or a section of a larger nonmagical object, that fits in a 5-foot cube. The target is reduced to dust. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Comet

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As an action, you can force a creature you can see within 60 feet of you to focus on you. For 1 minute, creatures other than you and the target are invisible to the target. The effect ends if any creature other than you damages the target or forces the target to make a saving throw. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Donjon

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can cast *Otiluke's Resilient Sphere*, requiring no spell components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Fates

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can tug on the threads of fate to tweak circumstance in your favor. After you make an ability check, an attack roll, or a saving throw, you can roll a d10 and add it to the total, potentially turning failure into success. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

House of Cards

ODDLEWIN THE NILBOG WILL READ YOUR FUTURE WITH HIS *DECK OF MANY THINGS*—FOR A PRICE.

CHARM OF THE FLAMES
Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As an action, you can summon two **bearded devils**. The summoned devils appear in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of you, obey your commands, and can't summon other devils. The devils take their turns immediately after yours on the initiative count. A summoned devil remains for 10 minutes, until it or you die, or until you dismiss one or both summoned devils as an action. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

CHARM OF THE FOOL
Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can cast *Major Image*, requiring no spell components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). When you cast the spell in this way, it lasts its full duration with no concentration required. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

CHARM OF THE GEM
Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As an action, you create a spray of 4d10 gems in a 30-foot cone originating from you. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes an amount of bludgeoning damage equal to the number of gems created. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage. The gems remain after the effect ends, and each one is worth 10 gp. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

CHARM OF THE JESTER
Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can cast *Tasha's Hideous Laughter*, requiring no spell components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

CHARM OF THE KEY
Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As a bonus action, you can touch a nonmagical melee weapon and imbue it with magic for 1 hour. For the duration, the weapon deals an extra 1d8 force damage on a hit and deals double damage to objects and structures. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

CHARM OF THE KNIGHT
Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As an action, you can summon two neutral good **knights** that are Celestials instead of Humanoids.

The knights appear in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of you and act as your allies. They take their turns immediately after yours on your initiative count. The knights remain for 10 minutes, until they or you die, or until you dismiss one or both of them as an action. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Moon

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As an action, you make a minor wish. When you do, you create the effects of a spell of 5th level or lower. The spell takes effect as part of this action and requires no spell components. Your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is the spellcasting ability for this spell (your choice). Once you use this charm, it vanishes from you.

Charm of the Puzzle

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can cast *Hypnotic Pattern*, requiring no spell components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Rogue

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can cast *Mislead*, requiring no spell components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). When you cast the spell in this way, it lasts its full duration with no concentration required. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Sage

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can cast *Divination*, requiring no material components and using your Intelligence as the spellcasting ability. Once you cast the spell three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Skull

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As a bonus action, you can transform into a deathly apparition. Your game statistics are replaced by those of a **wraith**, except for your alignment and personality; your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores; and your passive Wisdom (Perception) score and languages. You don't have the wraith's Create Specter ability. Your equipment vanishes when you transform but returns when the transformation ends. The transformation lasts for 1 minute, until your wraith form is reduced to 0 hit points, or until you use a bonus action to end it. If the wraith form is reduced to 0 hit points and there is still damage left over, the remaining damage applies to your normal hit points. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Star

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can cast *Enhance Ability*, requiring no spell components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). When you cast the spell in this way, it lasts its full duration with no concentration required. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Sun

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You learn the *Light* cantrip if you don't already know it. You can cast *Sunburst*, requiring no spell components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). Once used, the charm vanishes from you, and you unlearn the *Light* cantrip gained from this charm.

Charm of the Talons

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

As an action, you can cast *Dispel Magic*, requiring no spell components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). If you successfully end any spells with it, you gain 1d6 temporary hit points for each spell level of the highest-level spell ended. Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Throne

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can cast *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Mansion*, requiring no spell components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

Charm of the Void

Supernatural Gift (Charm)

You can cast *Banishment*, requiring no material components and using your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as the spellcasting ability (your choice). Once used three times, the charm vanishes from you.

I once received a charm from this fabulous witch queen in the Feywild. To this day, I admire her snark and her style.

CHAPTER 9

KNIGHT

A CHARACTER WHO DRAWS THE KNIGHT CARD from a *Deck of Many Things* gains the service of a loyal warrior. This chapter includes advice for DMs on how to introduce this helpful nonplayer character into the ongoing story of your campaign, as well as general advice about including helpful allies in a game without overshadowing the player characters. The chapter also introduces a new creature that can be the summoned knight: a Construct made of playing cards whose abilities scale with those of the characters.

In addition to DM advice, the chapter includes material for characters who live by their skill in combat: a collection of magic items and background elements inspired by the *Deck of Many Things*.

Magic Items

This section introduces new magic items a DM can include in a campaign.

Magic Item Descriptions

The following magic items are presented in alphabetical order.

Antimagic Armor

Armor (Light, Medium, or Heavy), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

While wearing this armor, you can use your reaction to give yourself advantage on a saving throw you make against a spell. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

In addition, while you wear this armor, you can use it to cast *Antimagic Field*, requiring no spell components. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Armor of Fungal Spores

Armor (Medium), Uncommon

While wearing this armor, you can take a bonus action to make the armor emit poisonous spores, which fill a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on yourself. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have the poisoned condition until the end of your next turn. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Armor of the Fallen

Armor (Medium or Heavy), Uncommon (Requires Attunement)

While wearing this armor, you can use it to cast either *Speak with Dead* or *Animate Dead*. Once the armor has cast a spell in this way, it can't cast either spell until the next dawn.

Your soul keeps this armor together. If you die while you are attuned to the armor, the armor is destroyed.

Armor of Weightlessness

Armor (Light, Medium, or Heavy), Uncommon (Requires Attunement)

This armor has 5 charges. While you wear it, you can use a bonus action to expend 1 or more charges to cast one of the following spells from the armor,

targeting yourself: *Jump* (1 charge) or *Levitate* (2 charges).

This armor regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dawn.

Bloodrage Greataxe

Weapon (Greataxe), Uncommon

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic greataxe while you have half your hit points or fewer.

Bloodseeker Ammunition

Weapon (Any Ammunition), Very Rare

Ranged attack rolls made with this ammunition have advantage against any creature doesn't have all its hit points.

Boomerang Shield

Armor (Shield), Uncommon (Requires Attunement)

You can make a ranged weapon attack with this magic shield. It has a normal range of 20 feet and a long range of 60 feet, and it uses your Strength or Dexterity for the attack roll (your choice). If you're proficient with shields, you are proficient with attacks made using this shield. On a hit, it deals 1d6 slashing damage. If you throw the shield, it reappears in your hand the instant after it hits or misses a target.

Bow of Conflagration

Weapon (Any Bow), Rare (Requires Attunement)

Ammunition fired from this bow blazes brightly. When you hit with an attack roll using this bow, the target takes an extra 1d6 fire damage. If the target is a flammable, nonmagical object, it catches fire, taking 1d6 fire damage at the start of each of your turns until a creature uses an action to extinguish the flames.

Bow of Melodies

Weapon (Any Bow), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This bow has multiple strings and resembles a lyre or small harp. By strumming the strings while setting an arrow to the bow, you imbue the arrow with magic.

You can play one of the following melodies when you use the bow to make a ranged weapon attack. You must choose to do so before you make the attack roll, and you can play only one melody per attack.

Melody of Precision. If you're proficient in Performance, you gain a +1 bonus to the attack roll. If you have expertise in Performance, you gain a +2 bonus instead.

Melody of Reverberation. The melody you strum echoes loudly. On a hit, the target takes extra thunder damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Clockwork Armor

Armor (Heavy), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

The outside surface and internal joints of this armor whir with interlocking gears, drawing on the orderly magic of the plane of Mechanus.

The armor has 4 charges. If you make a d20 roll while wearing this armor, you can expend 1 charge to change the number rolled to a 10. The armor regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn.

Dried Leech

Weapon (Any Ammunition), Uncommon

This leech has been dried and imbued with a mote of animating magic. If you hit a creature with a ranged attack roll using this ammunition, the leech springs to life and sinks its teeth into the target, dealing 1d4 piercing damage at the start of each of the target's turns. If the leech deals at least 10 damage or the target dies, the leech falls off. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach the leech. Once a leech is no longer attached to its target, the leech dies and is no longer magical.

Feywrought Armor

Armor (Light, Medium, or Heavy), Rare (Requires Attunement)

This colorful, flowery armor was forged in the Feywild and is infused with that plane's captivating magic.

While wearing this armor, you have advantage on saving throws you make to avoid or end the charmed condition on yourself.

This armor has 3 charges. You can use an action to expend a charge to cast the *Compulsion* spell (save DC 15) from this armor. The armor regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Forcebreaker Weapon

Weapon (Any Weapon that Deals Bludgeoning Damage), Very Rare

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

This weapon was crafted to destroy structures made of force, such as those created by *Forcecage* or *Wall of Force*. Striking a Large or smaller structure of magical force with this weapon automatically shatters that structure. If the target is a Huge or larger structure of force, this weapon shatters a 20-foot-cube portion of it.

Gloomwrought Armor

Armor (Light, Medium, or Heavy), Rare (Requires Attunement)

This intricate grayscale armor was forged in the Shadowfell and is infused with that plane's gloom.

While you're wearing this armor, you have advantage on saving throws you make to avoid or end the frightened condition on yourself.

This armor has 3 charges. You can expend a charge to cast the *Calm Emotions* spell (save DC 15) from the armor. This armor regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Grasping Whip

Weapon (Whip), Rare

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic whip. When you hit a creature or object that is Large or smaller with this whip, you can pull that creature or object 5 feet toward you instead of dealing damage.

Hammer of Runic Focus

Weapon (Warhammer), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

This magic hammer has 3 charges. As a bonus action, you can expend 1 charge and slam this hammer on the ground, creating a 15-foot-radius circle of glowing runes centered on the point of impact. While you're inside that area, your hammer glows with matching runes, and you gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this hammer. The rune circle disappears after 1 minute, when you create another rune circle, or when you dismiss the rune circle as a bonus action. This hammer regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Shield of the Tortoise

Armor (Shield), Uncommon (Requires Attunement)

While you are wielding this shield, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. This bonus is in addition to the shield's normal bonus to AC.

Curse. This item is cursed. Attuning to it extends the curse to you until you are targeted by a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic. You cannot discard the shield, and remain attuned to it, as long as you are cursed. As long as you are cursed, you are sluggish. Your speed is halved. When you roll initiative, treat the roll on your d20 as a 1. You can't change your initiative by any means.

Sling of Giant Felling

Weapon (Sling), Uncommon

When you hit a Giant creature with a ranged attack roll using this magic sling, the creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or have the prone condition.

Stonemaker War Pick

Weapon (War Pick), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic war pick. It has the following special properties:

Meld into Stone. You can cast the *Meld into Stone* spell from this war pick. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

Petrification. The war pick has 1d6 + 1 charges. If you score a critical hit against a creature that has fewer than 100 hit points, you can expend 1 charge from the war pick to have that creature make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature has the petrified condition for 8 hours. When the war pick has no charges remaining, it loses this property.

Sword of the Planes

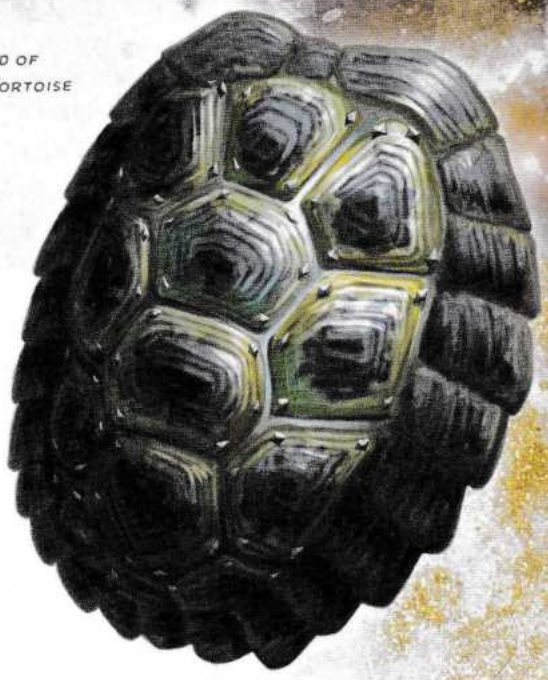
Weapon (Any Sword), Legendary (Requires Attunement)

You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic sword.

This sword can tear the fabric of reality, creating a temporary rift between planes. You can use your action to choose a different plane of existence from the one you're on and slice through an unoccupied space within 5 feet of yourself, creating a rift to that other plane. The rift can be up to 10 feet high and 10 feet wide, and it lasts for 1 minute. Once this property is used, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

You can specify a target destination, such as the City of Brass on the Elemental Plane of Fire or the palace of Dispater on the second layer of the Nine Hells, and the rift opens in or near that destination (DM's discretion). If you are trying to reach the City of Brass, for example, the rift might appear on the Street of Steel, before the Gate of Ashes, or facing the city from across the Sea of Fire, at the DM's discretion.

Anything that enters the rift is instantly transported to the other plane, appearing in the unoccupied space nearest to the rift.



Shield of the Tortoise

Hammer of Runic Focus

Sword of the Planes

Tidecaller Trident

Weapon (Trident), Very Rare (Requires Attunement)

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic trident. You also have advantage on attack rolls made with this weapon while underwater.

This trident has 3 charges. You can expend 1 charge to cast *Control Water* (save DC 15) from the trident or 3 charges to cast *Tsunami* (save DC 15) from it instead. The trident regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Winged Ammunition

Weapon (Any Ammunition), Uncommon

Ranged weapon attack rolls made with this ammunition ignore half and three-quarters cover. In addition, attacking at long range doesn't impose disadvantage on ranged weapon attack rolls made with this ammunition.

Wraps of Unarmed Prowess, +1, +2, or +3

Wondrous Item, Uncommon (+1), Rare (+2), Very Rare (+3)

While you're wearing these cloth wraps, your unarmed strikes are considered magical for the purpose of overcoming immunity and resistance to nonmagical attacks and damage, and you gain a bonus to the attack and damage rolls of your unarmed strikes, determined by the wraps' rarity.

Heroes of Destiny

The following table provides narrative ideas inspired by the *Deck of Many Things* that players can use as prompts while developing their characters. The tables' entries are geared toward warriors—particularly fighters, barbarians, and monks—but any character's story can benefit from the ideas presented here. When using this table to shape your character's story, you can either choose the entries that speak to you or randomly pull cards from *The Deck of Many Things* card set.

One of the most important steps of a warrior's journey is discovering the reason why you fight. Glory and fame are good motives, but they're often hiding something deeper—perhaps a longing to be accepted, or a burning desire to prove your naysayers wrong.

Me? I fight to protect others and to kindle hope. (And maybe, a little bit, to prove my father wrong.)

Knight Destinies

Card	Heroic Tie
Balance	Someone—or something—wronged you in your past. You seek revenge.
Comet	You've been promised an inheritance if you can make a name for yourself as a hero.
Donjon	You're stranded far from home and intend to fight your way back.
Euryale	A year of solitude gave you clarity and led you down the path of the warrior.
Fates	A fortune teller foresaw that you would find your calling in a life of battle.
Flames	When the heat of battle takes over, you barely recognize yourself. This scares you.
Fool	Friendly (or not-so-friendly) competition with a rival has spurred you to adventure.
Gem	You seek a fabled magic weapon or magic suit of armor. You won't rest until you find it.
Jester	You feel like a laughingstock but believe you'll make something of yourself on the battlefield.
Key	Someone close to you was kidnapped. You hope to find and rescue them.
Knight	You used to be a squire to a brave knight, but that knight died in combat.
Moon	Your dreams are haunted by the screams of those you couldn't save in battle.
Puzzle	Unpredictability is a hallmark of your fighting style. You keep enemies on their toes.
Rogue	Tales of your past heroic deeds might be somewhat exaggerated.
Ruin	When you lost everything, you realized the only thing you could rely on was your martial skill.
Sage	Descended from a family of sorcerers, you were the only one not to show magical aptitude.
Skull	You had a near-death experience, and you believe you saw yourself going to the Nine Hells.
Star	You're chasing notoriety, hoping for folk to sing of your deeds for years to come.
Sun	You once belonged to a small but mighty militia. Sometimes, you miss the regimented structure of that life.
Talons	When monsters attacked your hamlet, you found you had a way with weapons.
Throne	You honed your martial skills as a bodyguard to an important political figure.
Void	Slaying monsters is a welcome distraction to the growing emptiness inside you.

Drawing the Knight Card

This section provides advice for DMs whose characters draw the Knight card from a *Deck of Many Things*, as well as general advice about including allies who fight alongside the characters. Finally, the knight summoned by the deck is reimagined as a loyal Construct: the deck defender.

The Knight as Narrative Device

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* details how the nonplayer character summoned by the Knight card of a *Deck of Many Things* appears. But as discussed in chapter 2, the cards of the *Deck of Many Things* can instead be interpreted as narrative directions that point the way to a future event. In this case, the Knight card could portend a friendly warrior whom the character will soon meet—and who could become a loyal ally.

When the Knight card is used as a narrative device in this way, the ally it brings isn't magically summoned or compelled to obey the characters; the deck has merely foretold the ally's imminent arrival. Consider what motivates this ally to accompany the party. This ally could be new or familiar to the characters, and the ally might be repaying a favor or pursuing goals of their own.

Several kinds of allies are described below, each with a different reason for accompanying the party. Guidance on when the ally might depart is also provided. An ally who befriends the characters might linger in the story long after the ally's personal goals have been accomplished (especially if the players enjoy that NPC). If you're using *The Deck of Many Things* card set to foretell the future, boxed text for each ally provides dialogue a fortune teller might use to tell characters of the ally's imminent arrival.

Whatever type of ally you choose, the party should encounter this ally soon after drawing the card—within a few days or even sooner.

Grateful Ally

> Your good deeds shall be rewarded; gratitude becomes guardianship.

This ally is grateful to the characters; perhaps the characters saved the ally's life or helped the ally in a significant way. This is an especially good way to bring back an ally the characters liked but left behind in their adventures. The ally accompanies the characters until the ally considers their debt repaid, perhaps by saving a character's life.

If the ally is someone the characters already know, the fortune teller might hint at the ally's appearance or name.

Seeker Ally

> Find the one who searches; you need not look far, and both of you will benefit.

This ally hopes to find someone or something in a place the characters are going to. The object of the ally's quest is of utmost importance—such as a family member, a lost heirloom, or an ingredient for an obscure ritual. The ally remains with the characters until the ally can emerge safely from danger with the person or item they're seeking. If the ally is seeking a magic item hidden deep in a dungeon, for example, the ally helps the adventurers complete their mission after finding the item.

The fortune teller might hint at the person or thing the ally is seeking.

Studious Ally

> Knowledge is power, and someone who chases knowledge shall seek you out.

This ally wishes to study a particular dungeon, region, or creature. The ally might be a historian, planar explorer, botanist, or zoologist. Because the Knight card usually summons a warrior, a studious ally might be a bit of a surprise for the characters—someone they dismiss as unrelated to the *Deck of Many Things* until the scholar draws a weapon and ably defends themself in battle. The studious ally remains with the characters as long as there are more secrets to learn; when the characters leave the region the ally is interested in, the ally amiably parts ways with them.

A fortune teller might divine the region or topic the studious ally is interested in, giving the characters a direction when they want to seek the ally out.

Vengeful Ally

> Look for the one with a grudge to bear; a common foe will bring your paths together.

This ally shares a common enemy with the characters. The ally had someone or something taken from them by a terrible monster or villain—someone the

characters also oppose or soon will. Now, the ally hopes to slay that villain or bring it to justice, accompanying the characters until this task is done.

The fortune teller might be able to divine who this common enemy is, even if the characters haven't yet encountered that foe.

Running Allies

Allies are an important part of any adventuring party's career. However, whenever an ally joins the party for a significant amount of time, it's important the ally doesn't overshadow the player characters. Here are some ways to keep the party feeling like heroes, even when the cast of characters grows.

Let Players Take Charge

Consider letting your players control the ally. This can be a great way to keep more players involved if the party splits; when any player's usual character isn't present in a scene, they play the ally instead. It's helpful to give the ally a couple of distinguishing personality traits or mannerisms—such as greed, a love of beer, or a favorite expression—to make it easier to roleplay the ally on a moment's notice.

If you don't want the players to have the ally's character sheet or stat block, you can ask them what they'd like the ally to do and fulfill their requests. The ally might be eager for instruction, dutifully carrying out orders in the heat of battle. This is especially useful for allies who serve as the bodyguard for a wizard character or who partner with a rogue character to help the rogue perform sneak attacks. In this case, you can explain the ally's capabilities to the players so that the party can best use the ally.

Keep Allies Less Powerful

Players can feel undervalued if an ally is outperforming their characters. While an overly powerful ally is fine on rare occasion, the players should still feel like their characters are the true heroes of the story.

If you're building the ally as if it were a character, keep the ally 1 or 2 levels below the characters. If you're using a monster stat block instead, make sure its hit points and damage output aren't outpacing the characters', and be wary of powerful monster abilities, skill proficiencies, and spellcasting.

> Sometimes our paths cross with others' in the most fortuitous ways, bringing us allies and even friends. And though our lives may eventually diverge from theirs, that doesn't make the friendships any less meaningful.

Fill the Gaps

One way to avoid overshadowing the characters is to create an ally who has skills and abilities that complement the party's. Healing, tracking, and proficiency with thieves' tools (to disarm traps and unlock doors) are common examples of such skills. A group without magical healing isn't going to complain when an NPC cleric joins their party, so long as the cleric focuses on healing!

Similarly, you can give an ally abilities that bolster or otherwise support the characters without dealing damage on their own, such as the *Bless* spell or Bardic Inspiration. Perhaps the ally prefers to use the Help action, and if a character's ability check or attack succeeds with the ally's help, the ally grants an additional benefit. These tactics keep the spotlight on the characters, with the ally providing valuable support.

Limit an Ally's Presence

In larger parties, adding an ally can slow down combat. Consider having the ally tag along for only a session or two, or limit the encounters they appear in. Maybe the ally helps the characters in only a certain region or part of town and then leaves to attend to other duties. The important thing is that the ally is available when the characters want them and retreats into the background when the characters don't want or need the help.

Consider ways the ally could help the characters off-screen. The ally could defend the characters' base of operations from intruders while the characters are off adventuring. Or the ally might complete tedious side quests for the characters, gather valuable loot or information, or resolve old problems the characters have forgotten about or left behind.

Deck Defender

Deck defenders are Constructs made of large, intricately folded playing cards. You can use a deck defender when a character draws the Knight card, substituting the defender for the friendly ally the card usually summons.

Created from the multifaceted magic of a *Deck of Many Things*, a deck defender obeys the commands of the character who drew the Knight card. It can assume multiple shapes. When summoned, a deck defender first appears in its protective guardian form, bearing a folded sword and shield. The character who summoned the deck defender can fold it into the more threatening berserker form or the nimble acrobat form, as desired.

No matter what form a deck defender takes, its card-like nature makes it fragile. When a deck defender is defeated, it collapses into a pile of nonmagical cards.

Deck Defender

Medium Construct, Unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 5 + five times your level (the deck defender has a number of Hit Dice [d8s] equal to your level)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	3 (–4)	10 (+0)	1 (–5)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (can't see beyond this radius), passive Perception 10
Languages understands one of your languages but can't speak
Challenge — **Proficiency Bonus (PB)** equals your Proficiency Bonus

Allied Knight. Some of the deck defender's statistics are based on the character who drew the Knight card. Where the deck defender stat block refers to "you," it refers to that character.

Folded Versatility. After finishing a long rest, you can refold the deck defender's shape, changing it to acrobat form, berserker form, or guardian form.

Fragile. If the deck defender is reduced to 0 hit points, it collapses into a haphazard pile of nonmagical playing cards and can't be resurrected or reconstructed.

Actions

Multiattack. The deck defender makes a number of attacks equal to half its proficiency bonus (rounded down).

Paper Cut. *Melee Weapon Attack:* PB + 3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Reckless Strike (Berserker Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* PB + 3 to hit (with advantage), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage, and attacks made against the deck defender until the start of its next turn have advantage.

Bonus Actions

Swift Step (Acrobat Form Only). The deck defender takes the Dash or Disengage action.

Reactions

Protection (Guardian Form Only). When a creature the deck defender can see attacks a target other than the deck defender and is within 5 feet of the deck defender, the deck defender imposes disadvantage on the attack roll.

CHAPTER 10

SUN

This chapter details the Solar Bastion, a benevolent organization that protects the multiverse from the chaos wrought by the *Deck of Many Things*. The chapter includes a description of the organization and a map of its headquarters. It also explores how DMs can introduce the Solar Bastion to their campaigns, and how characters might join the Solar Bastion or otherwise become entangled in the group's operations across the multiverse.

The Solar Bastion

The Solar Bastion is an elite organization with extensive resources and a benevolent agenda. Its members style themselves as knights, though the organization doesn't grant them noble titles.

Founded by Hilarion, a solar angel, the Solar Bastion uses the sun as its symbol. Typically, this symbol is styled to evoke the Sun card in a *Deck of Many Things*, reflecting both the knights' origin and their mission in the multiverse. Sometimes knights wear this symbol openly on their gear, but more often they keep a sun-shaped pin hidden under a collar or lapel or carry a nonmagical copy of the Sun card to identify their allegiance when necessary.

Goals

The Solar Bastion monitors the *Deck of Many Things* in all its manifestations throughout the multiverse, warns and protects those who find it, and minimizes the damage it causes when found. Knights of the Solar Bastion also strive to protect people from other dangerous magic, such as cursed magic items and evil artifacts. The knights often provide aid with all sorts of magical mishaps, hauntings, and monstrous infestations.

The Solar Bastion has hundreds of members and a vast fortune, but its mission spans the multiverse, so its resources are constantly stretched thin; the Solar Bastion welcomes assistance from adventurers sympathetic to its goals.

Monitor the Deck

Most of the Solar Bastion's activity revolves around monitoring *Decks of Many Things*. The knights strive for the following goals in their pursuit of that effort:

Provide Aid and Counsel. When they find a *Deck of Many Things* in the hands of hapless mortals, knights of the Solar Bastion do everything they can to warn and assist the deck's owners. They make sure the owners understand the rules of drawing cards, the wide range of possible effects, and the dangers of keeping a *Deck of Many Things* long enough to draw the Grim Harrow's attention (the Grim Harrow is detailed in chapter 19).

Research the Deck of Many Things. When they aren't actively pursuing copies of the *Deck of Many Things*, knights of the Solar Bastion try to learn all they can about the origin and purpose of the cards. They know much of the deck's history (as described in chapter 2), including multiple contradictory accounts of its creation. Sorting through the conflicting legends and determining the truth about the *Deck of Many Things* is a

cherished goal, but not one that most members of the group have any real hope of achieving.

Track Rifflers. The Solar Bastion knows that Fey called rifflers (see chapter 21) often manipulate events to put *Decks of Many Things* into the hands of mortals. Thus, one way to monitor the location of the cards is to keep track of rifflers. Knights of the Solar Bastion use divination magic to find and spy on these creatures, though the knights directly interfere only if it's clear the rifflers have a *Deck of Many Things* in their possession.

Warn of the Grim Harrow. The Solar Bastion is on the lookout for the Grim Harrow: Undead that pursue *Decks of Many Things* across the multiverse (see chapter 19). Knights of the Solar Bastion try to reach those who come into possession of a deck before the Grim Harrow does, to warn them of the threat the Undead present. They also sometimes take action against the Grim Harrow, but they know they're no match for the leaders of that organization.

Find Asteria Again. Hilarion, the Solar Bastion's leader, encountered Asteria (see chapter 22) once when she infiltrated the organization's headquarters, and the angel managed to learn some of what Asteria knows about the deck's origins. Convinced that she is key to learning the truth about the deck, the organization seeks Asteria across the multiverse.

Prevent the Deck's Misuse. As a rule, knights of the Solar Bastion don't use force to wrest *Decks of Many Things* from those who possess them. However, they may break this rule if they discern that a deck's owner plans to use it for an evil or destructive purpose. In particular, they oppose the efforts of the Heralds of the Comet (described in chapter 12), who seek to use the original *Deck of Many Things* to destroy the multiverse.

Combat Curses and Wicked Magic

Decks of Many Things are notoriously resistant to divination magic that would reveal their locations, so knights travel widely in pursuit of even faint leads. Inevitably, many of these leads turn out to be the effects of curses and corrupt magic. Rather than ignore these situations, knights endeavor to protect those affected by curses, destroy cursed magic items, and contain evil and destructive artifacts so they can't cause further harm or be used for wicked ends.

The Solar Bastion's headquarters has a vault that holds at least one evil artifact the organization was unable to destroy, hiding it so it can't be put to evil use (which artifact this might be is up to you). Knowledge of the vault's location and contents is restricted to Hilarion, the Solar Bastion's leader.

Membership

Knights of the Solar Bastion are battle-hardened veterans who operate independently across the multiverse. When word reaches the organization that a *Deck of Many Things* has appeared, the nearest knight investigates, but every knight has the magical means to contact the Solar Bastion's headquarters and request help. Even so, it's rare for knights to work together outside their headquarters.

Recruitment

As they travel across the multiverse, knights of the Solar Bastion frequently encounter other individuals whose goals and interests align with their own. These encounters offer opportunities for adventurers to become involved with the work of the Solar Bastion or even become knights themselves.

Because the knights' resources are spread thin, the Solar Bastion welcomes assistance. A knight might recruit help for a mission that's too difficult to handle alone, but more often a knight opportunistically joins forces with adventurers, offering help with the party's efforts as long as their goals align. Often, the adventurers in these arrangements have no knowledge of the knight's true allegiance, and the knight rarely explains the Solar Bastion's purpose unless that information is relevant.

Characters who prove themselves competent and good-hearted might earn an invitation to become knights themselves. If the characters express interest, the knight brings them to the Solar Bastion headquarters. The only requirement for becoming a knight is swearing an oath to the knights' leader, promising to uphold the organization's goals.

Occasionally, knights of the Solar Bastion take in orphaned children and people in similarly desperate situations. These people might become squires to the knights, accompanying them on adventures and learning the order's ways, although Hilarion discourages this practice, preferring to see such folk returned to stable circumstances. Squires who prove their worth can count on being accepted as knights.

In addition to the knights who actively pursue the goals of the Solar Bastion, the order's eponymous headquarters is staffed with a variety of scholars, researchers, diviners, and retired knights who train active members.

Leadership

The founder and sole leader of the Solar Bastion is a neutral good **solar** angel named Hilarion. Hilarion was once the trusted lieutenant of a lawful good deity, and when a mighty cleric of that deity drew the Void card from a *Deck of Many Things*, Hilarion led the effort to retrieve and restore the cleric's soul. The quest proved so harrowing that Hilarion's faith eroded, and when the quest was complete, the angel

chose to establish the Solar Bastion rather than return to his god's service.

A powerful and immortal Celestial, Hilarion sees no reason for additional tiers of leadership in the organization. All members of the Solar Bastion report directly to him, and the knights are largely self-directed in choosing missions. Hilarion and the rest of the organization represent a pool of resources knights can draw upon during their missions, rather than a top-down leadership structure. In Hilarion's view, the goals of the organization are most important, not personal loyalty to him or obeying his rules.

That said, the knights of the Solar Bastion recognize the value of wisdom and experience. They respect the oldest knights' authority, whether those knights are active or retirees who serve as trainers in the citadel. No formal hierarchy confers authority on these knight-elders, but in practice they wield significant influence over less experienced knights.

Solar Bastion Knight

The Solar Bastion knight presented here is an example member of the organization.

Customize this stat block to suit individual knights and differentiate them from each other. For example, knights who track the Grim Harrow through the multiverse might resemble rangers instead of paladins.

In addition, Sir Jared, detailed at the end of the chapter, can serve as a model for knights with a lower challenge rating.

Solar Bastion Knight

Medium Humanoid (Paladin), Typically Neutral Good

Armor Class 20 (plate armor, shield)
Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +6, History +6
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common plus any one language
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Aura of Protection. The knight and each ally within 10 feet of it have advantage on saving throws. This trait is suppressed while the knight has the incapacitated condition.

Actions

Multiattack. The knight makes three Sunspear attacks.

Sunspear. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) radiant damage, or 21 (5d6 + 4) radiant damage if the target is a Fiend or an Undead.

Solar Flare (Recharge 5–6). The knight unleashes a blaze of brilliant energy that fills a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on the knight. Each creature of the knight's choice in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 22 (4d10) radiant damage and has the blinded condition until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage only. For the next minute, the affected area is filled with bright light that is sunlight.

Spellcasting. The knight casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15):

1/day each: *Greater Restoration*, *Sending*, *Word of Recall* (the prepared sanctuary is the Solar Bastion)

Headquarters

The Solar Bastion's eponymous headquarters is a fortified town built on a metal disk that orbits close to a small sun in a little-known reach of the Material Plane. The face of the disk on which the Solar Bastion is built faces the sun, so the sun is always high in the sky above it.

Map 10.1 shows the major features of the Solar Bastion, including the following locations.

Dome of the Sun

Hilarion's residence is a gleaming white dome that suggests both a lofty temple and a majestic palace in its architecture and furnishings. Sun shines through a circular window in the top of the dome, and Hilarion can usually be found seated on a throne beneath that shaft of sunlight.

A permanent teleportation circle is inscribed in the floor before the throne, allowing anyone who knows the circle's sigil sequence and the *Teleport* or *Teleportation Circle* spell to teleport directly to the dome. The throne also allows anyone seated on it to cast the *Sending* spell using the throne. Hilarion uses this feature to communicate with knights across the multiverse, but the angel allows knights or even some visitors to use this magic.

The Dome of the Sun is said to have a hidden vault beneath it. One or more evil artifacts are rumored to be stashed in this vault to keep them from being used for malevolent ends. It's generally believed that Hilarion is the only being who knows how to access the vault, but knights of the Solar Bastion suspect traps, other angels, or perhaps heavenly Constructs protect the vault as well.

Towers of Day

Seven tall watchtowers ring the edge of the Solar Bastion. In addition to offering a clear view of the entire fortress, the towers are equipped with magical devices that give their sentries the ability to detect threats approaching the bastion and even to peer into other planes of existence. Knights of the Solar Bastion usually stay in one of the Towers of Day while visiting the fortress, and while they're there, they also serve as sentries. Each tower typically holds at most a few such visiting sentries as well as a captain, usually an older knight retired from field duty who resides there permanently. Over time, the captains have customized their towers to suit their personal hobbies and research interests.

North Tower. The tower nearest the Dome of the Sun is imbued with magic that makes it serve as a sort of north pole for the fortress. Compasses point toward that tower, giving those in the bastion a common reference for cardinal directions.

Spelljammer Harbor

A docking area in the southeast part of the Solar Bastion offers a place for spacefaring spelljamming vessels to moor (see *Spelljammer: Adventures in Space* for more information about travel through space). Hilarion keeps a wasp ship—a lightweight spelljamming vessel that can be crewed by as few as five sailors—in the harbor, but there's room for a few more vessels depending on their size. Knights sometimes borrow Hilarion's vessel to pursue rumors concerning a *Deck of Many Things* when teleportation isn't a safe option. Knights who have spelljamming vessels of their own also dock them here when visiting the Solar Bastion, but the docks are seldom full.

Training Yard

In the center of the Solar Bastion is a large training yard where visiting knights hone their combat and magical skills. They mostly fight against each other under the watchful eyes of retired knights, but occasionally a knight brings a particularly horrific monster—typically a powerful evil Undead or Aberration—to the fortress so knights can work together to learn how to defeat it.

Library Tower

Across the Solar Bastion from the Dome of the Sun, the graceful spire of the Library Tower rises higher than the Towers of Day. Inside the library, a ramp winds up from the ground floor through vast ranks of shelves holding tomes, scrolls, and other repositories of learning. Scribes and scholars tend the place, sorting and indexing the volumes while making copies of particularly valuable resources. A tremendous amount of lore concerning *Decks of Many Things* is stored in this tower, much of it annotated by scholars attempting to sift fact from legend.

Artisans and Services

The Solar Bastion attracts skilled makers of weapons and armor. Weavers, tailors, healers, jewelers, booksellers, and other merchants also cater to the fortress's inhabitants and visitors.

Adventure Hooks

The Solar Bastion offers many opportunities for driving adventures in your campaign, whether or not a *Deck of Many Things* appears. Use these ideas to inspire adventures that feature the knights of the Solar Bastion; the nonplayer characters named here also appear in the Solar Bastion Contact table below, and the stat block for Sir Jared is presented at the end of the chapter:

Common Foes. The Heralds of the Comet (see chapter 12) identify both the characters and the Solar Bastion as threats and begin stirring up

Map 10.1: The Solar Bastion

KNIGHTS OF THE SOLAR BASTION ARE ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR EVIL ARTIFACTS.

public sentiment against both groups. A knight of the Solar Bastion traveling through the area, Sir Howart, is thrown into jail and threatened with execution. Can the characters rescue him without harming villagers led astray by a malevolent cult?

Haunted Riders. Sir Jared, a knight of the Solar Bastion looking for signs of the Grim Harrow (see chapter 19), has come across a different threat: **skeletons** or **wights** riding **warhorse skeletons**. Jared recruits the characters to help protect the local populace from these haunted riders and follow the riders back to their lair.

Sleeping Village. The characters come to a village where everyone is asleep—except Theira, a knight of the Solar Bastion, who has been trying to break the curse upon the place. Theira asks the adventurers for help, as a *Deck of Many Things* has been spotted at a traveling market many days away, and she's eager to track it down.

Soul Prison. The characters find a small sculpture that radiates magic. Further investigation reveals the sculpture contains the soul of a person who drew the Void card from a *Deck of Many Things*. The effort to identify the soul leads the adventurers to Gundra, a retired knight of the Solar Bastion, who long ago gave up searching for the soul. The soul's identity is up to you. It might be someone close to Gundra, whose loss prompted Gundra's retirement. Or it might be the soul Hilarion tried to rescue before founding the Solar Bastion centuries ago.

Suspicious Gains. The characters acquire a number of identical emeralds worth 1,000 gp each. After spending some of them, the characters are approached by Haddick, a researcher working for the Solar Bastion, who believes the gems came from a draw of the Gem card from a *Deck of Many Things*. Haddick asks the characters to help trace the origin of the emeralds and, if the deck is responsible, determine if this sudden wealth was used for evil ends.

Solar Bastion Patronage

Tasha's Cauldron of Everything presents rules for and examples of group patrons: individuals or organizations that serve as patrons to an adventuring party. The Solar Bastion can function as a group patron, offering resources while sending adventurers on missions that further the organization's goals.

Solar Bastion Perks

With the Solar Bastion as your group's patron, you gain the following perks.

Magic of the Solar Bastion. Knights of the Solar Bastion cast any spell available to them on your behalf without charge. See the **Solar Bastion knight**

stat block in this chapter for an example knight's spellcasting abilities. Some knights may have other spells they can cast, at the DM's discretion. The knight provides any costly material components needed for the spell, as long as you demonstrate your need and are in good standing with the Solar Bastion. In extreme circumstances, your group can appeal to Hilarion for more powerful magical assistance, including the *Resurrection* spell.

Equipment. You can purchase common magic items from your Solar Bastion contact. The DM determines the available stock or can call for a group Intelligence (Investigation) check to ascertain if the Solar Bastion's network can locate a desired item. The DC for this check is 10 in a city, 15 in a town, and 20 in a village. If the check fails, 1d8 days must pass before you can search for the same item again in that community.

The DM sets the price for a common magic item or determines it randomly: 2d4 × 10 gp, or half as much for a consumable item such as a potion or scroll.

Research. The Library Tower in the Solar Bastion is a vast repository of knowledge that can help you unearth hidden secrets. If you communicate with your Solar Bastion contact or visit the Library Tower in person, you have advantage on ability checks to research lore related to the *Deck of Many Things* and other topics of interest to the Solar Bastion (including evil artifacts, curses, and other topics at the DM's discretion).

Solar Bastion Contact

When adventurers have the Solar Bastion as a patron, one member of that organization—typically a knight—serves as the party's primary contact, relaying messages to and from Hilarion and the other knights. Roll or pick from the Solar Bastion Contact table to determine the nature of your primary connection to the organization.

I like Hilarion.
He gets straight to the point.

Solar Bastion Contact

d6	Contact
1	**Restless Retiree.** Gundra, an ancient dwarf, served the Solar Bastion in the field for over a century before retiring. She lives in the Solar Bastion now and relentlessly drills the knights she trains. She clearly misses working in the field.
2	**Grumpy Veteran.** Howart, an older human, has mentored many young adventurers, but most were smart enough to listen to his advice ... unlike you lot, who seem to think you know everything.
3	**Busy Supervisor.** Theira, a frazzled elf, has so many irons in the fire, so many projects to keep track of! Of course you're not imposing, she says, but can you get quickly to the point, please?
4	**Distracted Researcher.** Haddick, a middle-aged halfling, spends most of her time in the Library Tower at the Solar Bastion. Even when she's not at the library, or when she's talking to you, it's pretty clear that her mind is still there, focused on her latest subject of research.
5	**Lonely Knight.** Jared, a human knight of the Solar Bastion with a distinguished career, has traveled the multiverse alone so long he's become isolated and unsure of himself in social situations. He wants to help but needs encouragement to regain his naturally friendly demeanor.
6	**Hilarion.** The solar speaks to you directly, via the *Sending* spell or after summoning you to the Solar Bastion.

Solar Bastion Specialists

Because they usually work alone, knights of the Solar Bastion tend to be jacks-of-all-trades who know a little about a lot of things. As an adventuring party sponsored by the Solar Bastion, you instead provide specialized skills and have considerable freedom to pursue your specializations, as long as your efforts help to further the Solar Bastion's overall goals.

The Solar Bastion Member Roles table suggests roles you might fill in the Solar Bastion and the backgrounds frequently associated with each role.

Solar Bastion Member Roles

Role	Backgrounds
Counselor	Charlatan, entertainer, noble
Curse-breaker	Acolyte, folk hero, hermit, soldier
Investigator	Criminal, sage, sailor
Researcher	Guild artisan, sage
Tracker	Outlander, urchin

Solar Bastion Quests

In service to the Solar Bastion, most of your time is spent in pursuit of the organization's goals. The Solar Bastion Quests table presents examples of missions your contact might send you on.

Solar Bastion Quests

d8	Quest
1	**Aid and Counsel.** Your contact has learned another group of adventurers has discovered a *Deck of Many Things*. Find them before they draw from it, and warn them of its dangers—or help them get out of the mess their draws bring upon them.
2	**Research.** A rare tome said to describe early encounters with *Decks of Many Things* is thought to lie in the hoard of a dragon. Retrieve it!
3	**Track Rifflers.** Rifflers (see chapter 21) have been active in a remote countryside. Find out if they have a *Deck of Many Things*, and ensure they don't give it to a hapless mortal.
4	**Stay Ahead of the Grim Harrow.** Riders of the Grim Harrow (see chapter 19) are terrorizing a village as they search for a *Deck of Many Things*. Figure out where they're going, and get there before they do!
5	**Find Euryale.** Rumors of a reclusive medusa are spreading through a city. There's a slim chance the medusa could be Euryale, who could lead the knights to Asteria. Determine the medusa's identity and secretly follow her trail, if any, to Asteria.
6	**Prevent Misuse.** A hierophant of the Heralds of the Comet (see chapter 12) has acquired a few cards from the original *Deck of Many Things*. Ensure the complete artifact doesn't fall into her hands.
7	**Combat a Curse.** After plundering a dragon's hoard, adventurers attract constant ill luck. Make sure the treasure isn't cursed; if it is, ensure they aren't spreading the curse as they spend the gold.
8	**Contain an Evil Artifact.** The blights and ruination befalling a region suggest someone there is casting spells from the *Book of Vile Darkness* or perhaps wielding the *Wand of Orcus*. Do whatever is necessary to stop this person, and bring the evil artifact back to Hilarion so it can be contained.

Sir Jared

Jared is a wandering knight who makes an excellent contact for groups that have Solar Bastion patronage. A former mercenary, Jared credits Hilarion with helping him change his ways and use his skills for good instead of gold, but he feels unworthy of the organization and has grown lonely after so long away from the Solar Bastion.

Sir Jared

Medium Humanoid, Neutral Good

Armor Class 20 (plate armor, shield)
Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6
Skills Arcana +4, Athletics +7, Persuasion +6, Survival +5
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Actions

Multiattack. Jared makes three Longsword attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage. On a roll of 19 or 20, Jared scores a critical hit.

Reactions

Protect Ally. When a creature Jared can see attacks a target other than Jared that is within 5 feet of him, Jared imposes disadvantage on the attack roll.

CLAUDIO POZAS

CHAPTER 11

MOON

THIS CHAPTER DETAILS THE MOONSTALKERS, a thieves' guild of evil lycanthropes that Dungeon Masters can use in any D&D setting as criminals, rival treasure hunters, or potential patrons. Characters who draw the Moon card from a *Deck of Many Things* might cross the Moonstalkers' path, since that card grants wishes that the Moonstalkers want to acquire.

The Moonstalkers

A giant rat scurries into the sewers, clutching a magic ring between its yellowed teeth. A woman with a hidden moon tattoo picks the pocket of a benevolent official at a gala. A monstrous hybrid of human and wolf follows adventurers beyond the city limits, hoping to pilfer the wizard's spellbook.

No job is too despicable for the Moonstalkers, so long as the price is right. Those who have heard of the guild believe it disbanded years ago. Only those with strong criminal ties know the Moonstalkers are still operating and how to find them.

The Moonstalker guildhall is in a large city, but enchanted doors in the guildhall access other settlements during different phases of the moon. For instance, in a Forgotten Realms campaign, you might set the guildhall in the city of Neverwinter, with the phase-based doors connecting to Waterdeep, Port Nyanzaru, Baldur's Gate, and elsewhere.

History

At the guild's inception, the Moonstalkers had three bosses: Delour, a halfling wererat; Augustus, a human werewolf; and Pyrite, a dwarf wereboar. Delour was excommunicated from a local gang for attempting to usurp leadership. When he encountered Augustus and Pyrite, similarly lost and alone, he took them in.

Delour and his new companions were determined to make a name (and fortune) for themselves. They founded a thieves' guild, turning candidates into lycanthropes upon initiation, and named this guild the Moonstalkers.

Less than a year after the guild's establishment, local officials uncovered the Moonstalkers. Many Moonstalkers died in the resulting battle, and Pyrite was disintegrated. Delour and Augustus fled with the survivors to a larger city and started anew. They've keep a low profile and have successfully rebuilt the organization stronger than before.

Current Goals

Gold motivates the Moonstalkers to perform morally bankrupt work that others won't do. Delour is eager to expand into protection rackets, gambling rings, extortion, kidnapping, arson, and murder for hire. Augustus isn't opposed to this, but he's preoccupied with personal matters.

Both bosses agree the Moonstalkers need to bolster their ranks with powerful lycanthropes in case they're discovered and raided again, and so they can seek revenge on the officials who raided their old guildhall.

Important Members

Here are some of the Moonstalkers' most powerful and respected members.

Boss Augustus

Augustus is a hulking human werewolf of few words. He shares leadership of the guild with Boss Delour and has a knack for planning heists. Guild members consider him a brutal but fair leader. Some perceptive guild members—like Kathra Bitterwind—have noticed he's become more reclusive recently, and when he does appear, he's restless.

Augustus is a natural-born lycanthrope, born to werewolf parents. His parents were slain by monster hunters when he was young, and he traveled from town to town for most of his life, fleeing whenever townsfolk discovered his true nature.

Delour and Pyrite accepted Augustus in a way he'd never experienced before. When the three of them created the Moonstalkers guild, Augustus relished his new life of crime. But over time, his passion has faded. The riches they gathered mean nothing to him now. The violence grates on him, and he no longer empathizes with Delour's fantasies of revenge. Instead, Augustus secretly longs to end his curse and integrate into society.

Only a *Wish* spell can end Augustus's curse. He has ordered Wanewort, a night hag, to find anyone with access to that spell and plans to offer anything in his power in exchange for undoing his curse. And if bargaining doesn't work, there's always blackmail. (See the "Using the Moonstalkers in Your Campaign" section later in this chapter for more details.)

Boss Augustus

Medium Monstrosity, Neutral

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.; 40 ft. in wolf or hybrid form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Dex +7
Skills Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7
Senses passive Perception 20
Languages Common, thieves' cant (can't speak in wolf form)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Regeneration. Augustus regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn. If he takes damage from a silver weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn. Augustus dies only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Special Equipment. Augustus wields a *+2 Longsword*.

Actions

Multiattack. Augustus makes any combination of two Bite, Claw, or Magic Longsword attacks.

Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (5d8 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a Humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with lycanthropy. While cursed in this way, the target retains its alignment, languages, and equipment but otherwise uses the **werewolf** stat block, excluding actions that require equipment the target doesn't have. During any night when there's a full moon in the sky, the target becomes an NPC under the DM's control and remains so until the night ends. A *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic ends this curse.

Claw (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (5d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or have the prone condition.

Magic Longsword (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) slashing damage.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. Augustus polymorphs into a wolf-humanoid hybrid, a wolf, or his humanoid form. His statistics, other than his speed, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his humanoid form if he dies.

Cunning Action. Augustus takes the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Boss Delour

Delour the wererat is a sly trickster and consummate thief who rules the Moonstalkers alongside his friend Augustus. Delour's honeyed words and calculating mind make him dangerous. He can smile and shake someone's hand while simultaneously plotting to ruin that person.

Expanding the guild's activities beyond thievery was Delour's idea. He studies other criminal syndicates and their methods of getting rich. He considers protection rackets, smuggling, and arson to be low-hanging fruit, with extortion, kidnapping, and murder for hire being more complex challenges the guild can take on as it grows in power. His only real fear is exposure; the bigger and more active the Moonstalkers become, the more likely they are to attract the attention of law enforcement or adventurous do-gooders. The sting of the guild's flight from its first home is still fresh in Delour's mind.

Indeed, Delour never forgets a slight. He is obsessed with getting revenge on the officials who raided the original guildhall and killed Pyrite, who was like a brother to Delour. Though Delour is perfectly willing to backstab most people, he treats Augustus with utmost respect. If he discovers Augustus's plot to become human and leave the Moonstalkers, he would consider it the ultimate betrayal.

Boss Delour

Small Monstrosity, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 110 (20d6 + 40)
Speed 25 ft.; 30 ft. in rat or hybrid form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +7
Skills Deception +11, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Common, thieves' cant (can't speak in rat form)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Evasion. If Delour is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw and only half damage if he fails, provided he doesn't have the incapacitated condition.

Nimbleness. Delour can move through the space of a Medium or larger creature.

Regeneration. Delour regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn. If he takes damage from a silver weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn. Delour dies only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. Delour makes any combination of three Bite, Shortsword, or Hand Crossbow attacks.

Bite (Rat or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (5d8 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a Humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with lycanthropy. While cursed in this way, the target retains its alignment, languages, and equipment but otherwise uses the **wererat** stat block, excluding actions that require equipment the target doesn't have. During any night when there's a full moon in the sky, the target becomes an NPC under the DM's control and remains so until the night ends. A *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic ends this curse.

Shortsword (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Hand Crossbow (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. Delour polymorphs into a rat-humanoid hybrid, a Medium giant rat, or his humanoid form. His statistics, other than his size and speed, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his humanoid form if he dies.

Cunning Action. Delour takes the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

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Kathra Bitterwind

The human **werevulture** Kathra Bitterwind (see chapter 21 for the werevulture stat block) is the trusted lieutenant of both Boss Augustus and Boss Delour. Unlike most members, Kathra was already a lycanthrope when she joined the guild, and she quickly clawed her way to the top by proving her unwavering loyalty to its leaders.

Since the bosses spend most of their time at the Moonstalkers' guildhall, plotting and negotiating with powerful clients, most guild members spend far more time with Kathra than they do with either Delour or Augustus. She trains members and leads high-priority assignments, always expecting her accomplices to deliver the same professional precision she does. She has a short temper and no patience for new recruits, but she rarely loses her cool when it counts.

Wanewort

Wanewort the **night hag** performs rituals that help the guild pull off its schemes. She uses divination magic to scope out locations for future heists and casts illusions that disguise Moonstalker members. Occasionally she provides a member with a *Hag Eye* necklace, allowing her to see what they see so she can provide real-time guidance during a mission. She reports to the bosses, but they give her ample rein to pursue her own endeavors and delegate tasks to guild members. Wanewort has special lair actions she can use while in the Moonstalkers' guildhall (see area 11).

Wanewort has ten **imps** as companions. They spend almost all their time in the form of house cats, not out of secrecy, but because Wanewort prefers them that way. Guild members never see her without one of these cats in her arms, twining around her legs, or following in her wake. She pampers these imp-cats like spoiled children.

Augustus has asked Wanewort to find someone who can cast the *Wish* spell, but he hasn't told her why. She has developed a ritual that alerts her whenever someone draws the Moon card from a *Deck of Many Things*, anywhere in the world. She figures this is less dangerous than contacting spellcasters powerful enough to cast the *Wish* spell.

Wanewort

Moonstalker Guildhall

Most Moonstalker dealings occur in abandoned warehouses, the homes of members, or shadowy taverns. If the bosses choose to meet with a client in the guildhall, either they're looking to impress the client or they see the client as potentially dangerous and want backup in case negotiations break down. In either case, Moonstalkers usually blindfold visitors before leading them to the guildhall.

The entrance to the guildhall is located beneath a Moonstalker-owned tavern in a large city. Moonstalkers enter a storage room through the building's back door, from which they can descend a stone staircase to the guildhall's crescent antechamber.

Wanewort has also created four magical doors that connect to other cities during different phases of the moon. Each leads to a Moonstalker-owned building in that city.

Full Moons

Every Moonstalker learns how to embrace and manage the bestial impulses of their lycanthropy as part of their training. Still, the full moon makes it difficult for many members to maintain self-control—and more importantly, to remain covert. For this reason, all Moonstalkers lock themselves in the guildhall on the night of the full moon. Many of the guildhall's walls sport long scratch marks from particularly restless nights.

Guildhall Features

The guildhall has the following features:

Ceilings. Ceilings are 10 feet high unless the text says otherwise.

Doors. The doors are made of thick, sturdy wood. A locked door can be opened with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, or forced open with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check.

Illumination. Magical moonstones in the ceilings shed bright light in all rooms. The *Dispel Magic* spell can turn off a moonstone's glow.

Protection from Scrying. Wanewort's hag rituals prevent locations or creatures in the guildhall from being targeted by the *Scrying* spell.

Guildhall Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 11.1.

1: Crescent Antechamber

The curved southeast wall of this room has one permanent door, which leads to the guildhall's tavern entrance. Across from it stands a double door guarded by two **werewolves** and two **werevultures** (see chapter 21 for the werevulture stat block). This room's ceiling is 30 feet high.

The walls to the left and right of the entrance bear small bas-reliefs of a new moon, a waning moon, a half moon, and a waxing moon. When the moon reaches one of these phases, the corresponding symbol glows and a magic door appears beneath it, linking to a matching door in a different city. The door disappears when its phase of the moon ends.

On the nights of full moons, when all Moonstalkers lock themselves in the guildhall, most convene in this spacious chamber.

2: Commons

This common room is where Moonstalkers mingle, prepare for missions and receive orders. When the characters first visit, five **wererats** sit at a table, playing a game of cards. One hopeful initiate accompanies them: a human **bandit** who has yet to prove her mettle.

Moonstalker Stat Block Adjustments

To turn a generic lycanthrope stat block into a Moonstalker stat block, make the following adjustments.

Skills. Moonstalkers are proficient in Dexterity (Stealth and Sleight of Hand) checks.

Languages. Moonstalkers can speak thieves' cant.

Bonus Actions. Moonstalkers can use a bonus action to Dash, Disengage, or Hide.

3: Jail

In addition to holding captives, these jail cells are used to hold Moonstalkers who become particularly feral during the full moon. As a result, the walls of these jail cells are lined with deep claw marks.

A prisoner from a rival thieves' guild (use the **spy** stat block) is locked in one cell; Kathra Bitterwind visits occasionally to interrogate the prisoner.

4: Audience Hall

A carpeted dais stands at the northern end of this room. Large oil paintings of the guild's three original bosses hang from the walls. The bosses use this room for important announcements and initiation ceremonies. Lower-ranking Moonstalkers don't come through this area without good reason.

Treasure. Each oil painting is worth 250 gp.

5: Study

A moonstone chandelier casts a soft, bluish-white glow over this room's oaken table and chairs. The bosses use this elegant meeting room to plan future heists and to meet with guests they wish to impress.

6: Guard Post

Two **wereboars** stand before the northern doors, guarding the vault. They question anyone passing toward the bosses' rooms or Wanewort's den.

The double door is locked. It can be opened with one of the keys from the bosses' rooms.

7: Icy Vault

The floor and walls of this chilly room are covered with slick ice, making them difficult terrain. Any creature unaccustomed to icy environments that moves along the floor or walls must make a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw at the end of its turn. On a failed save, the creature has the prone condition. This room's ceiling is 30 feet high.

This vault holds much of the Moonstalkers' gold and treasure, but not all of it. The bosses spread their wealth across similar vaults in the five cities they can access.

A **young white dragon** named Rahaskardon prowls this room. The dragon obeys the bosses and Wanewort, guarding the Moonstalkers' treasure against intruders.

Treasure. This room contains coins, gems, and art objects worth a total of 9,000 gp. It also contains two uncommon magic items, one rare magic item, and one very rare magic item of your choice.

8: Shrine to the Fallen

This room has a small shrine with a headstone memorializing Boss Pyrite and other guild members who died when the Moonstalkers' old guildhall was raided. An inscription on the headstone promises revenge in the names of both Delour and Augustus.

9: Boss Delour's Quarters

A magic hearth flickers with white, heatless flame on the south wall of this room. Paperwork full of notes and detailed schemes sits atop a desk, alongside a tiny portrait of Delour, Augustus, and Pyrite painted soon after the guild was founded.

Boss Delour (see the stat block earlier in this chapter) spends most of this time in this well-kept room. He keeps his key to area 7 beneath his pillow whenever it isn't on his person.

10: Boss Augustus's Quarters

An owlbear rug stretches across this room's floor. Stuffed animal heads are mounted on the walls.

Boss Augustus (see the stat block earlier in this chapter) passes much of his time in this impressive room. He keeps his key to area 7 and the key to his chest in the mouth of a mounted deer head whenever these keys aren't on his person.

Chest. A wooden chest sits beneath the bed in this room. It can be unlocked with a successful DC 18 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. It contains mementos from towns Augustus lived in before founding the Moonstalkers: worn carpenter's tools, a quilt, a tavern mug, and a locket from an admirer.

Treasure. Augustus wields a *+2 Longsword*. He usually takes the sword with him when he leaves the room, but if he's resting here or has left the sword behind for some reason, it's leaning against the wall near his bed.

11: Wanewort's Den

Ten **imps** who have adopted the form of cats of various colors strut, creep, or sleep around this 30-foot-tall, circular room. Wanewort, a **night hag**, spends much of her time here as well.

In addition to a cauldron and the witchy ingredients typical of a hag's lair, this room is crowded with litter boxes, scratching posts, cat trees, feather toys, hand-knit kitty clothing, and catnip.

Wanewort has access to the following lair actions while she is in the Moonstalkers' guildhall:

Ghostly Passage. Until initiative count 20 on the next round, Wanewort can pass through solid walls, doors, ceilings, and floors as if they weren't there. She takes 1d10 force damage if she ends her turn inside an object.

Open and Shut. Wanewort targets any number of doors that she can see, causing each one to close. She can choose to lock a door as it closes. Wanewort can also use this lair action to unlock and open locked doors.

Treasure. A *Glimmering Moonbow* (see chapter 5) sits atop a high shelf in this room.

12: Scrying Pool

A large scrying pool takes up much of this room. Wanewort uses it for her *Scrying* spells. Anyone who looks at the pool while Wanewort is scrying sees the same creature or location that she does. When not actively being used to scry, the pool's surface shows a reflection of the moon in its current phase.

13: Armory

The **wereboar** in charge of the armory keeps it stocked with daggers, cloaks, thieves' tools, grappling hooks, and other equipment the Moonstalkers don't want to hide at their homes. The wereboar can usually be found here, maintaining this equipment.

14: Barrack

When a Moonstalker needs to spend the night at the guildhall instead of their home, they can sleep in the bunk beds at this barrack. Two **werewolves** and three **wererats** are currently sleeping here.

Using the Moonstalkers in Your Campaign

Here are some ways you can use the Moonstalkers to augment your campaign.

Antagonists and Rivals

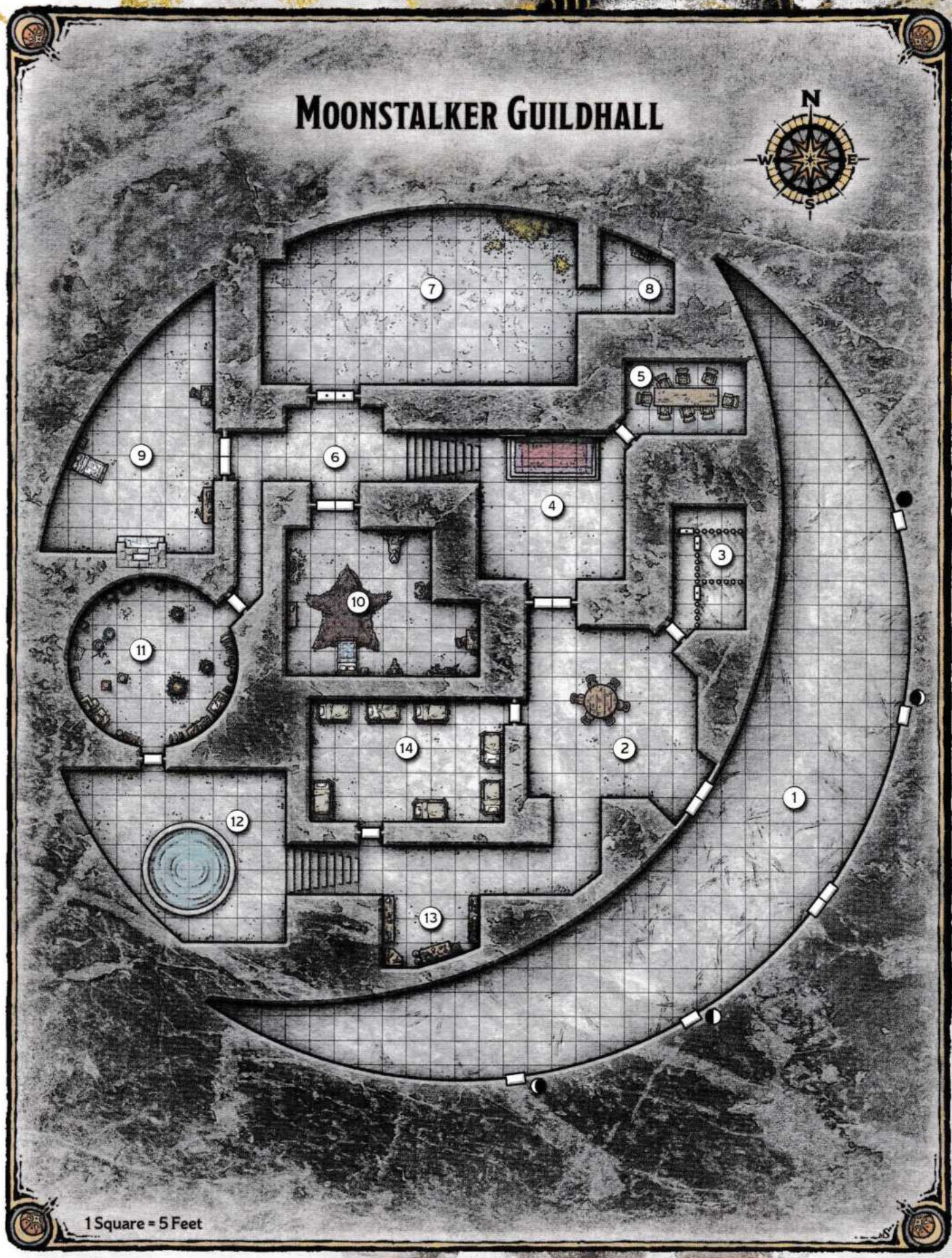
The most direct use of the Moonstalkers is for them to steal something belonging to the characters or someone close to them. The characters might strike a deal with the guild to get their treasure back or infiltrate the guildhall to retrieve it.

Alternatively, if the characters are looking to steal something (for instance, as part of an adventure from *Keys from the Golden Vault*), Moonstalkers might try to secure that same item for a different employer. In this case, the Moonstalkers act as rivals trying to beat the characters to the prize. This provides an incentive for characters to move quickly and not spend too much time planning or resting.

Bargaining for a Wish

If your characters have access to the *Wish* spell—for example, because they've drawn the Moon card from a *Deck of Many Things*—Boss Augustus makes them an offer they can't refuse. The characters could also be drawn into this story if a noncombatant draws the Moon card and becomes a target for the Moonstalkers.

Wanewort's ritual tells her the name and location of anyone who draws the Moon card. She also has contacts looking for anyone who can cast the *Wish* spell on their own. Once she has a target, she resorts to one of three tactics:



Map 11.1: Moonstalker Guildhall

Extortion. Wanewort scries on the character and uses her imps to spy on them. She uses the Moonstalkers' contacts to discover any unscrupulous or embarrassing activities in the character's past, then threatens to expose them.

Invitation. Wanewort uses her hag magic to communicate with the character in a dream. She explains she works for a man who has many magical treasures and powerful connections, and he wants an audience with the character. She gives the character a meeting point and time, at which point one of her imp-cats leads the character to Augustus. She doesn't tell the characters about the Moonstalkers.

Kidnapping. Wanewort sends a team of Moonstalkers to kidnap the character or the party. She's more likely to attempt this with a low-level character or noncombatant who drew the Moon card than with high-level characters who can cast the *Wish* spell on their own.

If Augustus is confident he can best the characters in a fight, he meets them alone somewhere other than the guildhall. But if he needs backup, he meets them in the guildhall's audience hall, where Moonstalkers can rush in at a moment's notice.

Augustus explains his condition as a natural-born werewolf and asks the character to wish for the end of his curse. He might offer them riches, magic items, or favors. He explains that wishes can go wrong; by trading their wish for concrete benefits, the character can let him shoulder the risk.

The Moonstalkers have many magic items stored within their hoards. If the character with a wish demands something Augustus doesn't have, he can order the guild to steal it. If the character refuses to trade their wish, Augustus threatens to expose the character's secrets or have the character killed.

Delour might catch wind of this plan and consider it a betrayal of the Moonstalkers, himself, and Pyrite. This could spark a violent schism within the guild or prompt Delour to secretly approach the characters and attempt to use their wish for himself—probably to resurrect Pyrite or get his long-delayed revenge.

Working with the Moonstalkers

The Moonstalkers don't always do their own dirty work. When a mission is too time-consuming, challenging, or simple, the guild assigns it to other criminals or to aspiring guild members. Even if your characters aren't evil, they might find themselves working for or alongside the Moonstalkers on an odd job. Perhaps both groups have a mutual enemy. Maybe the Moonstalkers learned the characters will be delving into a particular dungeon and ask the party to retrieve a specific piece of treasure. Perhaps the Moonstalkers extort the characters or refuse to divulge key information unless the characters do their bidding. Maybe the Moonstalkers offer so much money or such enticing magic items that the characters find collaboration hard to refuse.

Joining the Guild

Those hoping for guild membership (sometimes called "crescents") must complete three jobs for the Moonstalkers to be initiated into the guild. Crescents can work together, in which case the mission counts for all of them. Each job is more difficult than the last, and the final job always requires the crescent to take a life, usually the life of a guard or witness to the crime. The Moonstalkers then reward the crescent with lycanthropy, initiating them as a full member. Here are examples of missions the Moonstalkers might assign a crescent, in order of increasing difficulty:

Pick a Pocket. The character must steal a signet ring, holy book, or document from an important figure at a high-profile event like a speech or a gala. But the event has more guards than expected; someone tipped off the victim.

Collect Deadly Ingredients. Wanewort tasks the character with collecting an ingredient for her rituals, from either a dangerous grove or someone's garden. Identifying the substance requires skill, and it might be poisonous or spoil quickly, so the thief must hurry to deliver the goods on time.

Infiltrate a Vault. The character must delve into a dungeon, a holy crypt, or a noble's treasury and steal a particular item. All sorts of monsters might lurk in such a place, from Undead to inhabitants of the Underdark, but they aren't all hostile, and the character might be able to sneak past them.

Stage an Ambush. An old enemy of the Moonstalkers—one of the officials that drove them from their original home—is traveling nearby. The character is ordered to ambush and capture the target. Once the official is brought to the guildhall and the bosses get a chance to gloat, the character is expected to kill the official.

Crescents who complete three missions are congratulated by the bosses, who then determine what type of lycanthrope the crescents will become. With a ceremonial bite from another Moonstalker, the crescents become fully initiated guild members.

A full member of the guild doesn't have to spend all their time at the guildhall, but they do need to be ready to respond to any assignments they receive. If you're looking for inspiration for Moonstalker missions, consider using heists from *Keys from the Golden Vault*.

CHAPTER 12

COMET

THE END IS NEAR!

This chapter details the Heralds of the Comet, an apocalyptic sect that plans to use the original *Deck of Many Things* to bring about the end of all things. It describes key leaders, members, and roles in the group and presents a map of the group's headquarters. A section at the end of the chapter describes celestial signs, omens, and prophecies related to the end of the world and explores how these can enliven your campaign. This chapter is intended for the Dungeon Master, though characters might have a connection to the cult as ex-members, or as friends or relatives of members.

Heralds of the Comet

The Heralds of the Comet is a secret organization with a sinister agenda. Believing the multiverse is a flawed creation, members of this cult look forward to the end of all worlds and planes of existence. Low-ranking members anticipate a new creation, a multiverse made right in the wake of the old cosmos's destruction, but the leaders secretly believe the end really is the end; after the multiverse's destruction, only a formless void will remain.

The Heralds of the Comet is best suited for use as an antagonist in an adventure or a campaign. However, individual members aren't necessarily villains and might share short-term goals or friendly relationships with heroic characters. The "Adventure Hooks" section in this chapter explores possibilities for how characters might interact with the cult.

Tenets

The teachings of the Heralds of the Comet are revealed only in part to aspirants and in more detail to initiates. Only the group's leaders know the full doctrine.

Fundamental Tenets

The cult's basic tenets are shared with anyone who expresses an interest in learning about the group's beliefs. Such folk, known as aspirants, are taught the following:

Flawed Creation. Suffering isn't an accident, a flaw in a divine plan, or purely the work of evil gods. It's evidence that the whole of creation is fundamentally flawed and already unraveling.

Coming Destruction. The destruction of the world is imminent, and people should prepare for it by severing their connections to the things of the world. This includes relationships, possessions, wealth, and worship of the gods, who are doomed to be destroyed alongside mortals.

New Creation. After the destruction of the world, a new creation will take its place, and the elect will inhabit a perfect paradise.

Harbinger of Doom. A huge comet will signal the beginning of the end. Other signs also appear among the stars, the clouds, the seas, and world events, revealing the future to those who know how to interpret them.

Divinatory Deck. Divinatory readings using cards modeled after the original *Deck of Many Things* are an important way to gain insight into the future and the fate that awaits the world.

Arcana

Those who undergo a rite of initiation, which includes a solemn oath of secrecy, learn deeper truths that build upon the basic tenets of the group:

Preexistent Souls. The souls of mortal beings have always existed and aren't part of the flawed creation that is passing away. Souls dwelled in the Void before the creation of the multiverse, but now they are imprisoned within the multiverse. They must be set free from the multiverse lest they be destroyed along with it.

Lost Causes. Those who don't accept the teachings of the Heralds of the Comet are doomed to destruction, and they deserve pity. Initiates are taught to warn outsiders to ready themselves for the coming destruction. Many initiates are fundamentally kindhearted and try to help outsiders when they can, but they ultimately come to believe most outsiders are lost causes, too attached to the world as it is.

All-Consuming Star. The comet that presages the end is called the All-Consuming Star. It is a manifestation of the Void that moves through the multiverse, devouring worlds and entire planes. The end of all things will be the culmination of the All-Consuming Star's work.

Enlightening Divination. Divinatory card readings don't simply reveal the future; they open the mind to the presence of the All-Consuming Star, helping initiates liberate themselves from the world's grasp.

Esoterica

The leaders of the Heralds of the Comet, the hierophants, reserve a few secret doctrines for themselves, believing only the most enlightened souls are prepared to hear these harsh truths:

Imperfect Gods. The gods aren't perfect and can't create perfection, and imperfect things (by definition) don't last forever. The only true perfection is the Void, and the only future is the Void.

Feeding the All-Consuming Star. The rites of the Heralds of the Comet, including divinatory card readings, lend psychic energy to the All-Consuming Star, hastening the completion of its mission.

Deck of Many Things. The magic contained within the cards of the original *Deck of Many Things* is key to the destruction of the multiverse. Performing a reading with this *Deck of Many Things* won't simply reveal the future; it will determine the future, setting a date for the arrival of the All-Consuming Star. The hierophants of the Heralds of the Comet intend to use the deck to foment the unraveling of creation.

Membership

The Heralds of the Comet is a small, close-knit community. Through the process of severing their ties to the doomed world, members become entirely dependent on the group and its leaders for social interaction, material support, and the fulfillment of spiritual needs. The core tenet held by initiates—that they alone are destined to survive the apocalyptic end of all things and populate the new creation—creates a worldview where all that matters is the Heralds of the Comet.

Recruitment

The Heralds of the Comet seeks recruits to swell the group's ranks. Initiates believe they have a moral imperative to rescue as many people as possible from the coming destruction of the multiverse, so they see recruitment as an act of mercy. However, they quickly learn that most people dismiss their concerns and ridicule their beliefs, so they expect a low success rate in their recruitment efforts.

The group's carefully crafted recruitment message has its appeal: all your suffering and all the bad things in the world are proof that the world is unraveling—and most importantly, none of it is your fault.

Those drawn to this message are called aspirants. Each aspirant meets regularly with an initiate mentor, who teaches the aspirant the fundamental tenets of the Heralds of the Comet and performs divinatory card readings for them. These readings purport to help the aspirant work through personal issues, but the readings all point to the same conclusion: the world is dying, and the Heralds of the Comet offers the only way to endure its destruction. Aspirants are sometimes called Jesters, in reference to the card of that name, while outsiders are called Fools.

Aspirants are encouraged to give generously to the Heralds of the Comet to support its work. They're also encouraged to cut from their lives any people who might hold back their progress toward enlightenment. Aspirants thus gradually come to see the Heralds of the Comet as their sole source of truth and friendship.

Initiation

The Heralds of the Comet performs its rite of initiation once or twice per year, depending on the availability of would-be initiates and the appearance of a suitable omen of doom. When an omen appears (see the "Omens of Apocalypse" section at the end of this chapter), the hierophants bring the aspirants deemed ready to a sanctum for initiation (see the "Sanctum of the Heralds" section).

The rite takes place overnight. The aspirants, who are sleep deprived, hungry, and thirsty, are led through a series of experiences that narrate the group's version of the history of the multiverse,

featuring imagery drawn from the cards of a *Deck of Many Things*. Through the course of this narrative, the initiates learn more of the group's secret teachings and the symbolism used in divinatory card readings. At the rite's conclusion, the initiates receive a vision of the All-Consuming Star.

As part of this initiation, new members of the Heralds of the Comet shed their old identities and take on new names. Initiates also donate all their possessions to the group, which uses its accumulated wealth to provide for the basic needs of its initiates, and they take solemn vows of secrecy that prohibit them from discussing their initiation rite or disclosing the arcana of the group to outsiders. In the symbolism of the *Deck of Many Things*, initiates are sometimes called Knights.

Initiates who participate in the rites together speak of themselves as a single "brood" and remain especially close-knit. This brood is the only family that remains to initiates. Broods are numbered in the group's annals, and in the formal context of rituals, an initiate might be identified by their new name and brood number: for example, "Aphellis, Initiate of the Twenty-Sixth Brood."

Leadership

The leaders of the Heralds of the Comet are called hierophants—literally "revealers of the sacred"—because of their role in revealing the All-Consuming Star to initiates.

The archierophant of the Heralds of the Comet is Basil, the Sage of Sages, founder of the group and the architect of its belief system. While serving a forgotten king in an insignificant realm, Basil became fascinated with the original *Deck of Many Things*. He convinced his king to send a hero in search of it, then invited himself to the hero's expedition and betrayed her to acquire the deck. He rashly drew a card, and his soul was imprisoned in the Void. To Basil, it was a revelatory experience. He wasn't merely in the Void; he learned the truth of the Void's relationship to the fabric of creation. To this day, he remains obsessed with the *Deck of Many Things*, but now his obsession has a larger goal: unleashing the power of the All-Consuming Star so all creation can return to the Void.

Example Members

The stat blocks in this chapter represent members from each level of membership.

Aspirant of the Comet

Aspirants aren't yet initiated into the mysteries of the Heralds of the Comet, but they are firmly in the group's clutches, both socially and metaphysically. If an aspirant is killed, the hapless individual is drawn into the Void and devoured, body and soul.

Aspirant of the Comet

Medium Humanoid, Any Alignment

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common plus any one language
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Hunger of the Void. When the aspirant is reduced to 0 hit points, its body and everything it is wearing or carrying, except for magic items, are sucked into a void and destroyed. Creatures in a 15-foot-radius sphere centered on the aspirant must make a DC 11 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and is pulled 10 feet straight toward the aspirant's space. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage only.

Sinister Devotion. The aspirant has advantage on saving throws against the charmed and frightened conditions.

Actions

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Hierophant of the Comet

The number of hierophants is fixed at twenty-two on any one world, one for each card in a *Deck of Many Things*. As a group, hierophants are sometimes called Sages, but each hierophant is also identified with a particular card. When a hierophant dies, the remaining leaders choose an initiate to fill the position, preferring initiates from the oldest broods.

A new hierophant undergoes a rite similar to the rite of initiation, but only the other hierophants are present. As the cosmic narrative unfolds, the new hierophant is inducted into the esoteric secrets of the group's leadership. The rite concludes with a mind-shattering vision of the Void, which hierophants understand to be the formless nothingness that preceded the creation of the cosmos and will endure past its destruction.

The leaders of the Heralds of the Comet, hierophants are powerful warlocks with mighty spells at their disposal. They can commune with the alien mind of the All-Consuming Star, blast enemies with beams of eldritch energy, and conjure manifestations of this entity to devour their foes.

Hierophant of the Comet

Medium Humanoid (Warlock), Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)
Hit Points 153 (18d8 + 72)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +9
Skills Arcana +10, Deception +9, Persuasion +9, Religion +6
Damage Resistances psychic
Senses truesight 30 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common plus any two languages, telepathy 60 ft.
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Comet's Voice (1/Day). The hierophant can cast *Contact Other Plane*, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability.

Magic Resistance. The hierophant has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Thought Shield. The hierophant's thoughts can't be read by any means unless the hierophant allows it.

Actions

Multiattack. The hierophant makes two Herald's Axe attacks or three Comet Blast attacks.

Herald's Axe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

Comet Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) force damage.

All-Consuming Star (Recharge 6). The hierophant conjures a manifestation of the All-Consuming Star: brilliant light and haunting screams that fill a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point the hierophant can see within 60 feet of itself. Each creature within the sphere has the blinded and deafened conditions. Each creature that enters the sphere for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 27 (6d8) psychic damage and has the incapacitated condition until the start of its next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage only. The manifestation persists until the hierophant dies, has the incapacitated condition, uses a bonus action to end the effect, or uses this action again.

Spellcasting. The hierophant casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17):

At will: *Detect Thoughts, Mage Hand, Thaumaturgy*
1/day each: *Dimension Door, Mass Suggestion*

Bonus Actions

Star's Hunger. The hierophant targets one creature within 30 feet of the center of its All-Consuming Star. The target must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 30 feet toward the center of the All-Consuming Star.

BRIAN VALEZA

Initiate of the Comet

Medium Humanoid (Warlock), Any Alignment

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +5
Skills Arcana +2
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common plus any one language
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Magic Resistance. The initiate has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The initiate makes two Comet Strike attacks.

Comet Strike. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) force damage.

Spellcasting. The initiate casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

At will: *Mage Hand*, *Thaumaturgy*
1/day each: *Dimension Door*, *Divination*, *Enthrall*

Reactions

Moment of Foresight (1/Day). When hit by an attack roll, the initiate can force the attacker to reroll it and use the new roll, possibly causing the attack to miss.

Initiate of the Comet

Once initiated into the Heralds of the Comet, members learn magical divination practices that give them glimpses into the future.

Associated Creatures

In addition to the stat blocks for members of the Heralds of the Comet, consider using any of the following creatures as associates of the group:

Aberrations. Various star spawn in *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse* (**star spawn grue**, **star spawn hulk**, **star spawn larva mage**, **star spawn mangler**, and **star spawn seer**) could be manifestations of the All-Consuming Star sent or conjured to aid the Heralds of the Comet. Virtually any Aberration could fill the same role, such as an **aboleth**, a **beholder**, or a **mind flayer**.

Humanoid Cultists. The **cultist** and **cult fanatic** stat blocks can fill out the ranks of aspirants and initiates. Since members of the group are drawn from all walks of life, virtually any Humanoid stat block can serve the same purpose, from **commoners** and **thugs** to **nobles** and **mages**.

Warlocks. The **warlock of the Great Old One** (see *Monsters of the Multiverse*) could represent a less powerful hierophant.

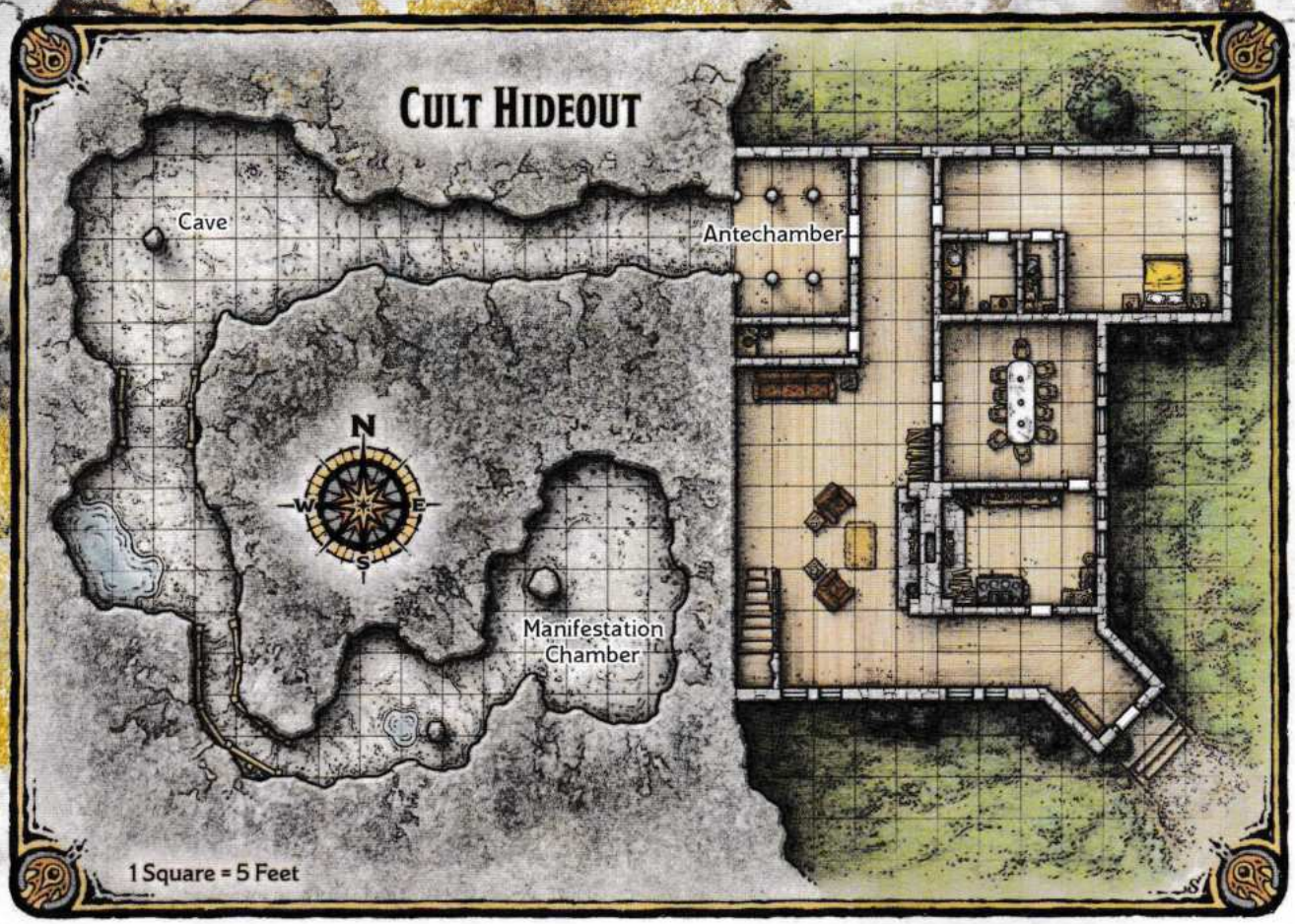
Sanctums of the Heralds

Most meetings of the Heralds of the Comet involve broods of initiates gathering in private homes to read divinatory cards and look for signs of impending cataclysm. Rites of initiation, though, take place in sanctums: remote headquarters like the one shown in map 12.1. A sanctum is a temple, meeting place, and residence for one or more of the group's hierophants, as well as for initiates who serve as caretakers. A sanctum is typically located a few miles outside a major city, allowing the group to meet in private while still enabling the residents to get to and from the city in an hour or two.

Sanctum Locations

The building shown in map 12.1 is a large house built in front of a natural cave opening, donated to the Heralds of the Comet by a wealthy aspirant. The first floor of the house includes a luxurious living room, a kitchen and spacious dining room, and a large bedroom suite on the first floor. The second floor (not shown on the map) has more bedrooms and a study.

Antechamber. At the end of the hallway leading north to the bedroom suite, an ornate stained-glass window depicts the All-Consuming Star as it is shown on the Comet card in a *Deck of Many Things*. In the northwest corner of the house, an antechamber serves as a place where aspirants gather before the rite of initiation begins. Arcane imagery



Map 12.1: Cult Hideout

decorates the room's walls and pillars, and each card from a *Deck of Many Things* is represented in images that surround the cave entrance in the west wall.

Cave. The winding cave is mostly natural, but the cult members have widened the narrow passages and shored up the crumbling cave walls with masonry. Stalactites hang from the ceilings, but most of the stalagmites have been cleared to allow easy passage. A few natural columns remain. Two natural pools are incorporated into the initiation rite: new initiates bathe in the larger pool and then drink from the smaller pool, whose cold and bitter waters are said to make them more receptive to the vision that awaits them in the final chamber.

The path through the cave descends steadily as it winds away from the entrance; the final chamber's floor is about 25 feet lower than the floor of the house. Metal disks are embedded in the wall approximately every 8 feet along the path. These disks are illustrated with icons of the cards of a *Deck of Many Things*, which serve as symbolic reminders of the group's teachings as initiates move toward the final revelation of the All-Consuming Star.

Manifestation Chamber. The final chamber is off-limits to all. In the climactic moments of the initiation rite, a hierophant uses the All-Consuming Star action (see the **hierophant of the comet** stat block) to fill most of the chamber with a manifestation of the ravenous entity. Those who dare enter the chamber risk being devoured when the manifestation appears.

Adventure Hooks

The Heralds of the Comet offers opportunities for adventures in any campaign. As an apocalyptic sect pursuing the destruction of the multiverse, it's best suited for an antagonistic role. Under certain circumstances, however, the cult could act as a short-term patron or an ally for an adventuring party. This section offers suggestions for adventures involving the cult, followed by ideas for how you might use the Heralds of the Comet to drive the action of an entire campaign.

Heralds as an Adversary

Use these ideas to inspire adventures that feature the Heralds of the Comet as an antagonist:

Awakened Destruction. The Heralds of the Comet acquires magic that allows it to unleash a powerful force of destruction: a natural disaster, a rampaging monster, or a magical catastrophe. Perhaps the characters learn of the group's plans before the destruction begins and can prevent it, or maybe they're called upon to stop it after it begins.

Common Criminals. The characters have resources the Heralds of the Comet wants: a magic item or artifact, or simply wealth. Some initiates, convinced they are robbing wicked people to benefit the greater good, are sent to steal from the characters.

Cultic Isolation. Someone the characters care about cuts off contact with them. When the characters investigate, they learn the person has been initiated into the Heralds of the Comet and now associates only with other initiates. The only way the person will talk to the characters is if the characters show (real or feigned) interest in becoming initiates themselves. Perhaps the person has information or a magic item the party needs; if it's an item, the person might have given it to the group's leaders.

Public Enemies. A hierophant stirs up public sentiment against the characters in retaliation for the characters' unwanted interest in the cult's business. The hierophant claims the characters are forces of instability and blames them for all manner of misfortunes and societal ills. Even people with no ties to the Heralds of the Comet begin shunning the characters. The hierophant's rhetoric escalates until the local populace is ready to drive the characters out of town.

Staged Omens. The Heralds of the Comet recruits members most successfully in times of fear and unrest. When pronouncements of celestial omens aren't enough, a hierophant decides to sow unrest by hiring mercenaries to trouble the region, summoning monsters to the outskirts of town, or starting destructive fires. The hierophant then points to these events as signs of the world's unraveling.

Heralds as a Patron or an Ally

Characters who work with the Heralds of the Comet might befriend helpful members. But eventually the characters learn the cult's true agenda and realize they're partially responsible for the group's success. Use these ideas to inspire adventures that feature the Heralds of the Comet as a patron or ally:

Heroes Foretold. When the characters arrive in a new town, they're hailed as heroes whose arrival was foretold. The Heralds of the Comet is active in this town, and its divinatory card readings portend a forthcoming conflict between a terrible monster and mighty champions. Initiates do all they can to help the characters prepare to face the monster.

Innocent Victims. Several initiates run a hospital on the outskirts of a city, where they care for those who are ignored by society. The initiates view these people as casualties in the slow unraveling of the multiverse and try to ease their suffering while subtly spreading the teachings of the Heralds of the Comet. But the hospital has come under attack—from bandits, disapproving aristocrats, or dangerous monsters—and the initiates seek help defending the place and its residents.

Basil, the Sage of Sages

Inside Job. A newly inducted hierophant is appalled to learn the cult's secret teachings. While posing as a devout leader, the hierophant asks the characters to help bring down the organization.

Prophetic Research. The characters find an ancient inscription in a long-forgotten ruin foretelling a dire calamity that's imminent. As they seek information about this prophecy, they are directed to a local expert on apocalyptic writings—a hierophant of the Heralds of the Comet. The hierophant shares research into related prophecies but remains guarded about the group's beliefs. The hierophant might sponsor the characters' efforts to explore more ruins to learn about this looming disaster.

Useful Pawns. A hierophant hires the characters to acquire magic for the Heralds of the Comet. There's no obvious indication the group will use this magic for destructive or evil purposes, and the pay is good. Only when the hierophant comes across a clue to the location of the original *Deck of Many Things* does it become clear that the cult's intentions aren't benign.

Omens of Apocalypse

Modern science can explain astronomical events like comets, meteor showers, and eclipses, but these explanations don't necessarily hold true in D&D. Instead, these phenomena might be supernatural events loaded with portents of divine wrath or impending doom.

Whether or not you introduce the Heralds of the Comet to your campaign, an apocalyptic event can set the stage for a campaign. An apocalyptic event is preceded by an ominous warning of the event, followed by a calamity, the prophesied disaster.

Warnings

Warnings are the first stage of an apocalypse. A warning can involve a divine voice or a messenger telling people that the end is near, that punishment is coming unless they change their ways, or that they are heading down a path with disastrous consequences.

The Apocalyptic Warnings table provides ideas for warnings that foretell disaster.

Apocalyptic Warnings

d12	Warning
1	A large star or comet appears in the night sky, shedding as much light as the full moon.
2	A constant stream of meteors is visible in the sky, even during the day, always moving in the same direction.
3	The sky turns sickly green or bruised purple.
4	The water of a river or a lake or along a coastline turns to blood, acid, or blue sand.
5	All creatures born on a particular day (including livestock and wild animals) have a common feature, such as incandescent eyes, a fiery halo, or brightly glowing blood that is visible through the skin.
6	Locusts, cicadas, wasps, spiders, or snakes swarm in unimaginable numbers.
7	Earthquakes shake the ground with increasing frequency and strength.
8	A warning message in countless languages appears all over a city's walls.
9	A hermit who is a local legend comes to town and delivers a warning.
10	A dead angel falls from the sky in a fireball that strikes the earth, leaving a charred skeleton with burnt wings and a scorched trumpet.
11	Everyone has the exact same dream, in which a disembodied presence delivers a warning.
12	All children simultaneously stop what they're doing and convey the same warning in unison.

Warnings could also be natural (or supernatural) indicators of what is coming, just as a red sunrise is often an indicator of coming storms. Subtler warnings might need special understanding to be interpreted properly; they are often meant to encourage people to seek out the wisdom of the gods from prophets or seers.

Warnings leave fear and uncertainty in their wake. An individual might take desperate measures to persuade others to take such a warning seriously, or seize property and goods from others to prepare for the disaster to come. The resulting chaos creates an opening for opportunistic evil organizations to increase their activities at a time when law enforcement and governments are stretched thin. A whole campaign could take place in the shadow of an apocalyptic comet, before the disaster it foretells even comes to pass.

Once the warning has been delivered, can the calamity it foreshadows be averted? Typically, the answer is yes—that's the point of giving a warning. If the people who receive the warning appease the gods, repent of their evil ways, turn aside from their self-destructive course, or send heroes to destroy the source of the disaster, the apocalypse is averted, and life can return to normal.

Sometimes the coming disaster can't be averted; the warning is the prelude to an inevitable cataclysm. This can be a good way to radically transform your campaign. For example, if the characters survive disaster only to see their world destroyed, they might seek refuge in the stars of a Spelljammer campaign or among the many planes.

Calamities

If warnings are the introduction, calamities are the main event. The calamity could be a freak disaster or a natural consequence of actions people have taken. Perhaps the world goes through cycles of prosperous times and calamities that span centuries. In any event, when the calamity arrives, it's no longer a question of averting the catastrophe, but of surviving it. The Apocalyptic Calamities table offers ideas for ways a great calamity could unfold in your campaign.

A calamity could also be a sort of cosmic test, intended to weed out the unworthy or select great heroes for some future purpose, or it could be an unfortunate side effect of some cosmic catastrophe, such as a war between gods or the collision of two planes of existence.

A cataclysmic event (with or without a warning) can serve different functions in your campaign.

Apocalyptic Calamities

d12	Calamity
1	The **tarrasque** awakens. (A **kraken**, an **empyrean**, or another titan might also serve as an agent of apocalyptic wrath.)
2	A deadly plague that's resistant to curative magic sweeps the land.
3	A prolonged drought leads to terrible famine.
4	A volcano (or chain of volcanoes) erupts.
5	A large asteroid crashes into the world.
6	A vast sinkhole opens, swallowing a city into the Underdark or one of the Lower Planes, or releasing hordes of Fiends.
7	The gods are stripped of their power and are forced to occupy mortal forms.
8	The world is drawn into another plane of existence.
9	The gods war among themselves or against incredibly powerful alien beings.
10	Magic goes awry, creating random zones of wild magic (where casting any spell of 1st level or higher causes a roll on the Wild Magic Surge table in the *Player's Handbook*) and dead magic (like an *Antimagic Field* spell on a larger scale).
11	The corpse of a slain god falls to the earth.
12	Every Dragon is consumed with unthinking rage and unleashes devastation on those living nearby.

It might set the stage for a campaign focused on people struggling to survive in the wake of this catastrophe. Alternatively, your campaign could be about rebuilding society after the disaster, prompting survivors to question beliefs and actions that led to such overwhelming destruction.

In the middle of a campaign, a disaster like this signals a major shift. If the apocalypse is preceded by warnings, the campaign might first focus on the characters' efforts to avert the catastrophe; then on mitigating the disaster; and finally on surviving, rebuilding, or escaping to another world.

A similar shift can happen with a catastrophe at the end of a campaign. In this case, the apocalypse should feel like the logical outgrowth of events leading up to it—perhaps even the result of actions taken by the characters!

I may disagree with the gods occasionally, but hopefully never enough to warrant the apocalypse.

A BRUISED-PURPLE SKY AND A SWARM OF HORNETS HERALD THE COMING APOCALYPSE.

CHAPTER 13

STAR

When Istus created the first *Deck of Many Things*, she drew constellations from the sky to create each card. This chapter presents these constellations, known as the Sky of Many Things, complete with magical effects created by the constellations as well as a zodiac that might influence the destiny of those born under its signs.

The latter part of the chapter, intended for the DM, includes details and rules for observatories: locations that facilitate stargazing and astronomical studies.

The Sky of Many Things

A zodiac is a series of constellations that appear to rotate around the night sky in time with the changing seasons. Many people use the alignment of zodiac constellations to explain personality traits, mysterious phenomena, or other patterns. This section presents a zodiac called the Sky of Many Things. It was from this zodiac that Istus, god of fate, drew the original *Deck of Many Things*.

If you're a player, the Sky of Many Things might inspire your character's backstory, starting from the moment that character was born. If you're a DM, this zodiac can inspire countless adventures themed around prophecy and fate, or it could be a starting point for a zodiac of your own creation.

Zodiac Signs

A zodiac sign is a mythological entity associated with a constellation in a zodiac. For the Sky of Many Things, a creature is said to be "born under" a zodiac sign if its birthday occurs during the period when that sign's constellation is most prominent in the night sky. In other zodiac traditions, a creature's "sun sign"—the constellation that overlapped with the sun at the time of the creature's birth—might carry more weight.

Each zodiac sign is associated with an omen: a vague prophecy of the events of an individual's life. These predictions might not come true, or they might manifest in unanticipated ways.

In the sections that follow, each zodiac sign's entry includes its common nickname, the period in which its constellation appears most prominently in the night sky, a description of the sign's constellation,

Many Stars, Many Worlds

In the settings of D&D, most stars in the night sky are suns, planets, or other distant objects, all of which exist in pockets of vacuum called Wildspace. A group of associated celestial and planetary objects is called a Wildspace system. Wildspace systems exist on the Astral Plane—an infinite void that surrounds all worlds of the Material Plane.

Different Wildspace systems drift about the Astral Plane. Greyspace is the system of the Greyhawk campaign setting, for example, and Realmspace encompasses Toril and the neighboring planets of the Forgotten Realms. Clownspace, Krynnspace, Xaryxispace, and countless other Wildspace systems populate the Astral Plane.

Some stars in D&D aren't ordinary astronomical phenomena—they're far stranger things: the remains of dead gods, the domains of evil entities, or vast cosmic civilizations. Stargazers who spin tales about the sparkling lights in the night sky might be surprised at how accurate their stellar myths really are.

common myths and beliefs about it, and omens associated with creatures born under that sign. The signs are presented in their order within the zodiac.

Skull

The Watcher; Most Prominent in Midwinter

Dim stars form the eyes and teeth of the Skull, also known as the Watcher. This constellation looms near the horizon throughout the year, then fills the center of the sky during the depths of winter. Its inscrutable expression suggests a skeletal face gazing upon—or grinning at—the other constellations of the zodiac.

Omen of Death. Those born under the Skull are regarded as harbingers of mortal doom or fatal misfortune. Many experience tragedy at a young age. Professions associated with this sign include coroner, executioner, exorcist, grave robber, and mortician.

Balance

The Merchant; Most Prominent in Late Winter

A scale made of stars represents the Balance. The constellation's brightest star forms the fulcrum on which the plates of the scale rest. Many illustrations of the Balance show a venerable trader standing behind the scales.

Omen of Fair Treatment. Those born under the Balance are fated for a life of equal measure weal and woe; every misfortune they endure is eventually balanced by good tidings. Many Balances live up to their birth sign's moniker by becoming traders or merchants.

Sage

The Wise One; Most Prominent in Early Spring

In early myths, this staff-carrying constellation aimlessly wandered all over the sky. His restlessness abated only after he settled a dispute between the Balance and the Throne.

Omen of Imagination. Those born under the Sage are destined to solve a particularly obstinate problem or unravel a confounding mystery. This leads many Sages to an adventuring life, but they also find plenty of puzzles to solve as engineers or physicians, or in law enforcement careers.

Throne

The Everlasting; Most Prominent in Midspring

The Throne's prominence marks the beginning of the Righteous Quartet, four months commonly associated with honor, goodwill, and righteous feelings. The Everlasting's stars lead the way, heralding the life and energy usually associated with warmer months.

Omen of Promise. Powerful rulers hope to see an heir born under the Throne, as individuals born to this sign often end up adopting leadership roles. But leadership takes many forms—a child born under the Throne might head a large family, run a professional guild, or rise to prominence in a temple.

Key

The Child; Prominent in Late Spring

Many artists' interpretations of this constellation show a child holding a silver Key in one hand. The child's smile suggests benign curiosity. As this illustration suggests, the Key is often associated with great power in humble (or even hapless) hands.

Omen of Insight. Those born to the Key are destined to travel to unexplored places, break taboos, and question assumptions long held dear. They are guides and scouts, researchers and archaeologists, revolutionaries and thieves.

Flames

The Lovers; Most Prominent in Early Summer

Tempers and passions flare under the Flames, also known as the Lovers. The stars that form the constellation suggest embracing figures or, in more chaste circles, a pair of hands pressed palms together. In mythological stories, the Lovers are bored by the Talons and would rather make tragic deals with the Gem. When portrayed as a person, the Flames takes up with the Rogue, contributing to the belief that opposites attract.

Omen of Passion. Children born under the Flames are destined to arouse strong emotions in other people—be it love or anger. They are artists, counselors, and religious figures.

Knight

The Dragon Slayer; Most Prominent in Midsummer

The Knight soars overhead during high summer—the final month of the Righteous Quartet. The prominence of these stars coincides with sunny weather and summer storms—times of tranquility and war, devastation and prosperity.

Omen of Valor. Children born under the Knight are destined to embark on and succeed in a great quest. In adulthood, they take up the adventuring lifestyle and befriend other thrill-seeking heroes. There's no more loyal friend than one born under the sign of the Knight.

Euryale

The Gardener; Prominent in Late Summer

When the legendary druid Euryale appears on the horizon, farmers sow their final late-season seeds and prepare their other fields for harvest. Euryale's constellation was created at the same time as the first *Deck of Many Things*. Artistic renditions of this constellation often show Euryale's hair as a tangle of snakes and wildflowers.

The Sky of Many Things

Omen of Dedication. Those born under the sign of Euryale are fated for intense personal relationships that prove their value when hardship comes. They find careers as caregivers or in other occupations that allow them to work closely with another person, as a squire assists a knight.

Rogue

Night's Edge; Most Prominent in Early Autumn

Like a skilled bandit, the Rogue slinks onto the night sky without drawing attention to herself. By the time leaves are turning color and evenings are getting colder, Night's Edge already looms high overhead, dagger in hand. Legend has it that in her haste to steal from Euryale, the Rogue failed to notice the valuable Gem right behind her.

Omen of Betrayal. Those born under the Rogue are destined to be betrayed by someone close to them, or to betray first in an act of self-preservation. They pursue trades that reward shifting loyalties, such as con artists, courtiers, or politicians.

Gem

The Genie; Most Prominent in Midautumn

Different cultures might view this constellation as a diamond, ruby, or sapphire. The Genie appears in countless zodiac legends, typically as the mysterious instigator of the Knight's adventure, the source of the Sage's wanderings, or the silent shadowy companion of the Jester.

Omen of Abundance. The Gem is a sign of good fortune, and those born under this constellation are blessed with a prosperous future. While most born under the Gem hope for material wealth, abundance can take many forms, including a large family or a grand collection of inherited objects.

Talons

The Elder; Most Prominent in Late Autumn

Many societies see the herald of winter as a dour constellation. In some folklore, the Talons is a stern grandparent of the Knight or the Flames. When one of these younger signs commits a grievous error despite ample warning, the Elder chides the youth while taking the blame. In other tales, the Elder is a usurper of the Throne and seeks to gain power by manipulating the Rogue or scheming with the Skull.

Omen of Loss. Children born under this sign are sometimes distinguished by a wrinkled brow, supposedly a mark left by the Talons themselves. These children are destined to lose everything—or to cause an equally devastating loss for another. They can be found in occupations that involve taking and hoarding, such as loan shark, smuggler, and burglar.

Jester

The Nilbog; Most Prominent in Early Winter

The Jester dances atop the other zodiac members, portending the start of winter. Good cheer and wry sorrow occur in equal measure when the Nilbog is involved, and many winter holidays are celebrated under his mischievous grin.

Omen of Chaos. While those born under other signs find a hint of their future in the stars, the futures of those born to the Jester are unknowable. These people tend to be agents of chaos, and they can be found in any occupation.

Zodiac Associations

The Common Zodiac Associations table summarizes astrological beliefs about the Sky of Many Things. The first three columns list the names of the zodiac's constellations, their nicknames, and the time of year they appear most prominently in the night sky. The next three columns denote the birthstone, creature, and color associated with each of the twelve signs.

The Ability Score column suggests individuals born under a specific sign are believed to have characteristics related to this attribute. People born

Common Zodiac Associations

Sign	Nickname	Prominence	Birthstone	Creature	Color	Ability Score
Skull	The Watcher	Midwinter	Onyx	Imp	Black, white	Constitution
Balance	The Merchant	Late winter	Quartz	Fish	Orange	Intelligence
Sage	The Wise One	Early spring	Garnet	Sphinx	Purple	Intelligence
Throne	The Everlasting	Midspring	Ruby	Dragon	Gold	Charisma
Key	The Child	Late spring	Opal	Cat	Silver	Wisdom
Flames	The Lovers	Early summer	Moonstone	Unicorn	Pink	Charisma
Knight	The Dragon Slayer	Midsummer	Diamond	Griffon	Blue	Strength
Euryale	The Gardener	Late summer	Emerald	Basilisk	Green	Wisdom
Rogue	Night's Edge	Early autumn	Jet	Rat	Black	Dexterity
Gem	The Genie	Midautumn	Blue sapphire	Whale	Indigo	Strength
Talons	The Elder	Late autumn	Jade	Owlbear	Yellow	Constitution
Jester	The Nilbog	Early winter	Pearl	Goose	Red	Dexterity

under the Balance, for example, might be referred to as shrewd or cunning, a sign of their high Intelligence score.

Zodiac Phenomena

The constellations of the Sky of Many Things can impose powerful magical effects. These zodiac phenomena can be benign or harmful, temporary or permanent, isolated or far reaching. A zodiac phenomenon might sweep over an entire planet once in a generation, or it might occur monthly in a remote village. The DM decides when and where zodiac phenomena occur as well as their impact on the affected region.

The Zodiac Phenomena table lists effects and brief encounters associated with the constellations of the Sky of Many Things. You can use the effect associated with the zodiac constellation most prominent in the game's current time of year, or you can choose randomly by rolling on the table. The following are examples of events that might correspond with a zodiac phenomenon:

- A season changes, with a new constellation rising to prominence.
- One or more planets align inside a given constellation.
- Darkness falls on a moonless night.
- The characters take a long rest.
- A character peers through an observatory's telescope.
- The clouds break, revealing the stars above.
- A creature casts a divination spell.

On nights when I'm feeling especially lonely, I'll search the sky for that distant green star of Euryale's constellation. And then, no matter where I am in the multiverse, I feel like I'm home with my sister.

Zodiac Phenomena

d12	Effect
1	**Skull.** The unliving surge with renewed zeal. Undead in the region gain 13 (3d8) temporary hit points daily at dusk.
2	**Balance.** Each creature in the region intuitively knows the immunities, resistances, and vulnerabilities of any creature it sees in the region.
3	**Sage.** Emotions are muted in the region, but minds open to new ideas. Creatures in the region have advantage on Charisma checks made to improve the attitude of other creatures in the region.
4	**Throne.** The resolve of the law-abiding is bolstered, while rebels are emboldened to passionately pursue their causes. Creatures in the region are immune to the frightened condition.
5	**Key.** A creature can unlock an object in this region simply by touching it, even if the lock is magical.
6	**Flames.** Emotions in the region become more intense. Whenever a creature in the region tries to alter the attitude of another, a failed Charisma check always results in the latter creature turning hostile if it wasn't hostile already.
7	**Knight.** Spectral knights routinely fly across the sky. Whenever the characters are outdoors and become embroiled in combat in the region, one or more knights descend from the sky to help them, provided none of the characters is evil. Each round on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the knights deal 9 (2d8) force damage to each of the characters' enemies. After the battle, the knights bow, then disappear.
8	**Euryale.** Natural vegetation in the region grows poisonous thorns. A creature that enters or ends its turn in difficult terrain caused by this vegetation must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the creature instead has 1 hit point and has the petrified condition until that condition is removed by the *Greater Restoration* spell or similar magic.
9	**Rogue.** Sneaks find their efforts easier in the region. Creatures in the region make Dexterity (Stealth) checks with advantage.
10	**Gem.** At midnight on a clear night, the stars appear to multiply tenfold, then rain down to the ground as minuscule silver meteorites. In all, 100 gp worth of silver falls harmlessly from the sky, scattered throughout the region.

d12	Effect
11	**Talons.** Some magic is suppressed in the region. Common magic items, cantrips, and 1st-level spells don't function within this area.
12	**Jester.** Misfortune besets people in the region. Whenever a Humanoid in the region makes an ability check or an attack roll and rolls a 1 on the d20, it has the incapacitated condition until the end of its next turn, as it is magically overcome with laughter.

Observatories

Observatories are structures that help astronomers and stargazers observe the cosmos. This section includes rules and adventure ideas the DM can use for an observatory in any campaign.

The simplest observatories are flat platforms on tall hills, sometimes with upright stone slabs with holes carved into them to aid in stargazing. A well-appointed observatory could boast resources such as complex telescopes, libraries, mechanical clocks, and magical divinatory aids.

An observatory can serve a variety of roles in adventures. Its air of occult mystery makes it an enticing place to explore, and the kinds of people and monsters attracted to an observatory—sages, eccentrics, and space travelers—make it a great location for roleplaying and combat encounters.

Observatory Locations

For optimal stargazing, an observatory is typically situated at a high elevation, such as a mountain peak or a coastal bluff. Astronomers prize a clear, dark sky, so many observatories are built in the wilderness. Such locations are often isolated, and the staff that work in these remote locales are famous for eccentricities born out of extended loneliness and isolation. That said, a particularly well-equipped observatory can employ magic to cut through the firelight and smoke created by a nearby settlement, enable quick travel for astronomers and supply wagons, and communicate with far-off individuals.

Regional Effects

Observatories are places of wonder that bridge the known world and the cosmos, so observatories and their environs are often affected by supernatural forces. You can apply one or more regional effects to an observatory to make the place feel otherworldly, or you can invent a new regional effect of your own. These regional effects don't affect the challenge rating of monsters encountered around the observatory:

Alien Hot Spot. The observatory is an alluring destination for alien stargazers. Extraterrestrial Aberrations are much more likely to appear within 6 miles of the observatory.

Clear Nights. The weather around the observatory is always cool and calm. During the day, fog covers the area within 6 miles of the observatory, making the area heavily obscured. At dusk, the fog clears, unveiling a cloudless night sky.

Communal Dreaming. Creatures that fall asleep within 6 miles of the observatory share the same dreamscape. While dreaming, creatures can see and interact with other sleeping creatures' dream forms, but they can't harm or otherwise affect one another's physical bodies.

Constellation Lines. At night, stars visible from the observatory are connected by faint, silver lines that demarcate the constellations.

Timeless Materials. The observatory was built to withstand the test of time and buttressed with fortifying magic. The observatory and structures within 6 miles of the observatory never erode or degrade from natural causes.

Example Observatory

Map 13.1 shows an example of a midsize observatory. This observatory is staffed by 2d4 scholars who study the stars and provide visitors with information and counsel. Use the **mage** stat block to represent these scholars, if necessary.

Despite their meager resources, the astronomers who work at this remote observatory don't charge adventurers for most services. Instead, the scholars might request a favor, such as clearing out a local monster den or collecting a rare magical ingredient from a nearby mountaintop. In return, the scholars allow the characters to use the observatory as a temporary base and grant the characters access to the observatory's amenities, as described below.

Astronomical Clock

The front door of the observatory leads into the building's ground floor. Suspended from the ceiling is a clockface ten feet across, surrounded by slowly turning gears. Slender metal chains descend from the gears through small holes in the floor to a subterranean waterwheel. Since this observatory is on

Distant Wonders

Magical telescopes can see things an ordinary spyglass can't, from far-off worlds to incoming comets. Some astronomers, such as scholars of the Solar Bastion or the apocalyptic Heralds of the Comet, can use such telescopes to locate obscure wonders, like the Donjon Sphere. The Solar Bastion, Heralds of the Comet, and Donjon Sphere are detailed in chapters 10, 12, and 17, respectively.

a hilltop with no access to running water, attendants use a *Decanter of Endless Water* to fill an elevated basin that feeds the waterwheel. As the wheel rotates, the chains connected to it move the clock gears, which in turn control the hands and dials on the clock's face.

This clock can tell not just the time of day but also the times for sunrise and sundown, the phase of the moon, and the position of the zodiac. The observatory charges visitors a fee to see the clock and have a scholar interpret it for them. This is the observatory's primary source of income; since demand is low, funding is a perpetual struggle.

Adjoining chambers accommodate the observatory staff. Stairs ascend from the clock room to the library.

Library

The library on the second floor of this observatory holds books of extraterrestrial esoterica, plus astronomical references like star charts, almanacs, and maps of Wildspace systems. Unusual items of celestial import, such as fallen meteorites and flora collected from alien worlds, are also kept here for study.

Planetarium

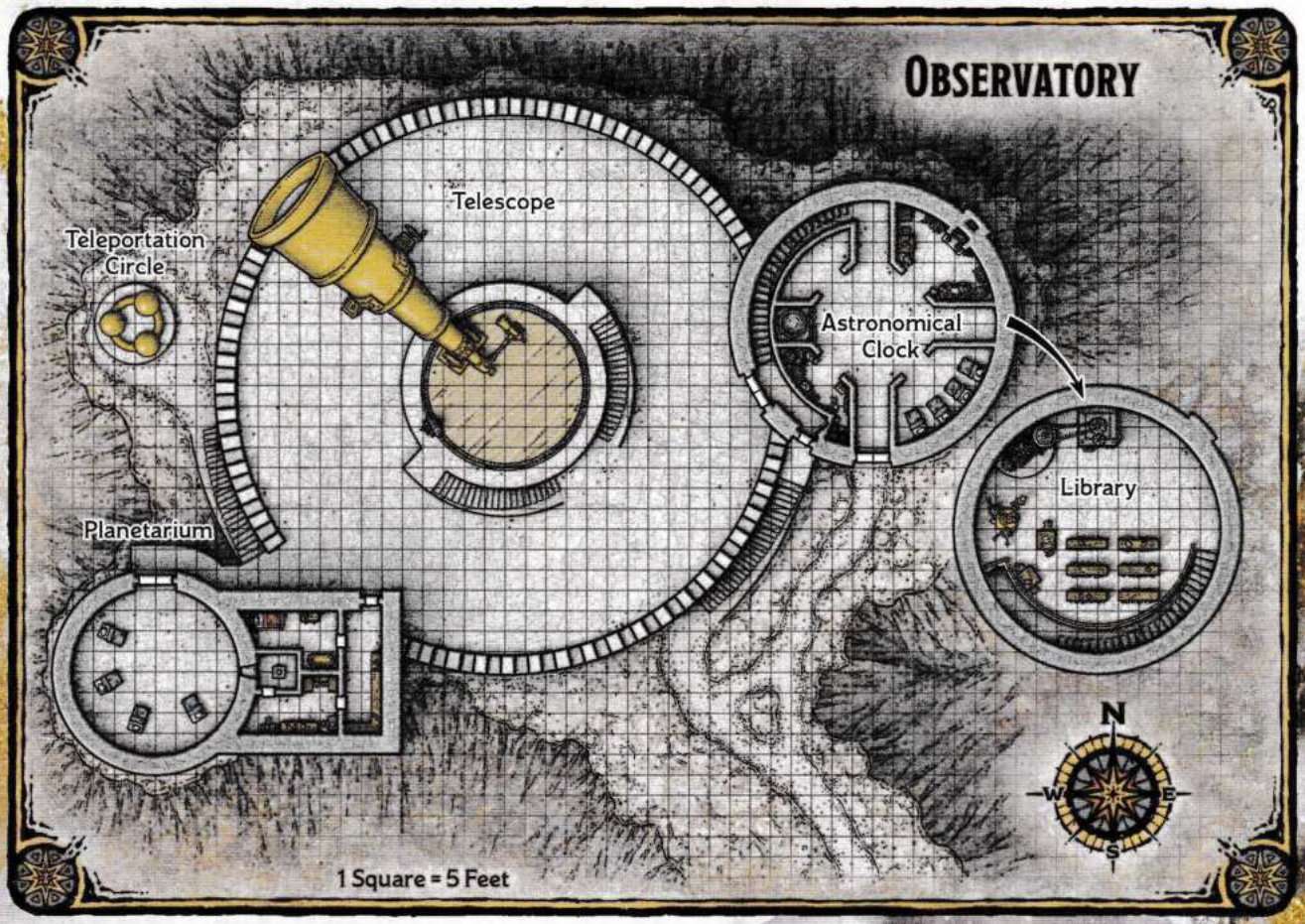
The domed ceiling of this windowless chamber is permanently enchanted to show the stars and planets overhead, night or day. Four comfortable couches allow visitors (or astronomers seeking a nap) to watch the stars in peace. Using a crystal orb in an adjacent room, resident astronomers can change the illusion to simulate the view of the night sky from any point on the planet at any time of year.

Teleportation Circle

Spellcasters who cast the *Teleport* or *Teleportation Circle* spell can use the sigil sequence inscribed on this permanent teleportation circle.

Telescope

The massive mechanism here is a priceless *Telescopic Transporter* (described later in this chapter). The astronomers who work at the observatory are extremely proud of their telescope and regale any visitor with the long tale of how it was designed, financed, and finally constructed—at great cost. This story always ends with a suggestion that visitors should help address the observatory's perpetual financial woes with a modest donation.



Map 13.1: Observatory

Telescope Travel

Certain magical telescopes allow their users to not only view the stars, but also travel among them. Of course, as with most types of powerful technology, the use of such a device comes with significant risks. The following magic item is one example of a telescope that enables interstellar travel.

Telescopic Transporter

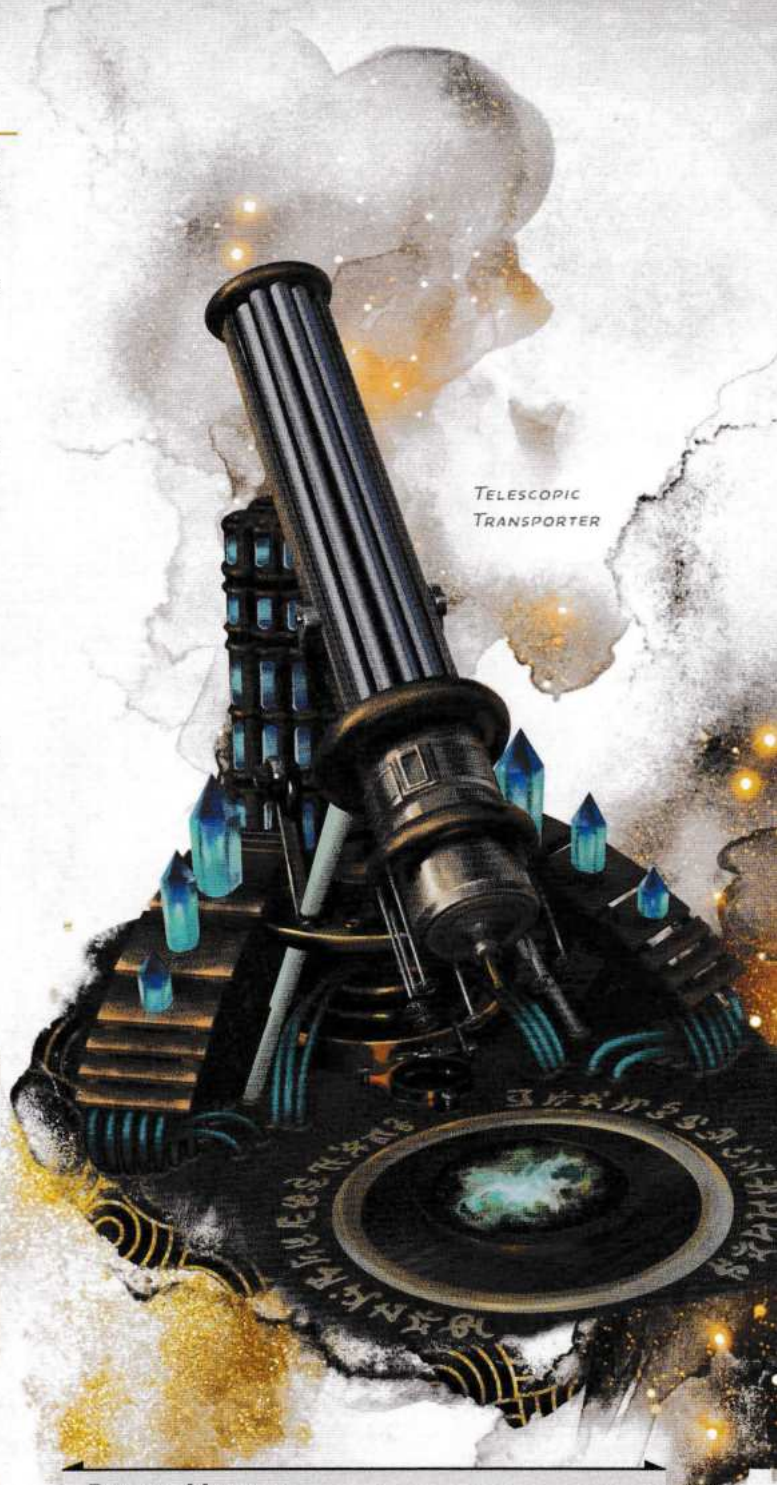
Wondrous Item, Legendary

This enormous telescope allows you to view distant celestial objects, including stars, Wildspace systems, and Astral Sea phenomena like the cities of deities or the petrified husks of dead gods.

After spending 1 hour calibrating the telescope, you can attempt to travel to the planet or celestial body at which the telescope is currently pointed. At the end of the hour, make a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a successful check, you and eight other willing creatures touching the telescope, along with everything all travelers are wearing and carrying, safely teleport to unoccupied spaces at the intended destination. On a failed check, a mishap occurs instead. The DM rolls on the Telescope Travel Mishaps table to determine the mishap or chooses a mishap that's good for the campaign.

Telescope Travel Mishaps

d6	Mishap
1	The travelers appear adrift in the Astral Sea.
2	The travelers appear on a different plane of existence, determined randomly or chosen by the DM.
3	Excess cosmic energy overloads the telescope, causing it to explode. Each creature within 60 feet of the telescope takes 8d6 necrotic damage. Any Humanoid who survives this damage is transformed into a different kind of creature, as if it had been subject to the *Reincarnate* spell.
4	A creature from the Astral Sea (such as a **githyanki knight**) appears within 60 feet of the telescope. The DM decides its attitude.
5	The travelers appear on a different planet or celestial body in the Wildspace system nearest to their target destination.
6	The travelers arrive at their intended destination, but they each appear coated in harmless slime.



Telescopic Transporter

Rescue Mission

A character who draws the Donjon card from the *Deck of Many Things* is whisked away to an extradimensional prison such as the Donjon Sphere, detailed in chapter 17. This remote dungeon drifts in the vast Astral Sea, so reaching it is no mean feat. However, a *Telescopic Transporter* is a ready—if slightly unreliable—means of reuniting the party. The Donjon Sphere holds one of these telescopes, so a character trapped there might use it to find a way home. At your discretion, the rest of the party could instead find a different *Telescopic Transporter* and use it to travel to the Donjon Sphere for a daring rescue mission.

CHAPTER 14

JESTER

This chapter introduces Seelie Market, a traveling Fey marketplace that DMs can add to their campaigns. Seelie Market can appear anywhere nature has made its mark, from forest glades to rocky canyons. Here, characters rub elbows with wondrous Fey and purchase magic items through unusual means. The market's resident fortune teller, Oddlewin the nilbog, introduces a *Deck of Many Things* to low-level adventurers.

Seelie Market

Attentive travelers might notice a shimmering, majestic dragon soaring above the clouds. A wagon caravan trails behind the dragon, attached to it by a magical harness. Usually the dragon disappears behind a cloud, taking its strange caravan with it, and is seen no more. But sometimes the dragon makes a gentle, spiraling descent into a forest or another secluded area. Those who seek it out discover a bustling market where fey folk peddle fruit, haggle over bargains, and seal sinister deals. This is Seelie Market.

To determine how the party first learns of Seelie Market, you can roll on the Seelie Market Introductions table or choose the most fitting option.

Seelie Market Introductions

d6	Introduction
1	A strange trail of toadstools leads off the beaten path into the nearby woods.
2	A pixie beckons you to follow her, promising you a sight beyond your wildest dreams.
3	A man stumbles from the forest. He doesn't speak, but his arms are full of delicious-looking fruit.
4	The party hears chattering voices and the music of panpipes coming from a secluded area.
5	In the distance, the party sees a descending dragon pulling a caravan of wagons.
6	A dragon's gentle voice calls out to the characters in their dreams, giving them directions to the market but no further details.

Pazrodine

Pazrodine, a moonstone dragon with a peaceful demeanor, oversees Seelie Market. A consummate traveler, she is always searching for fey crossings, which she uses to travel between the Feywild and the Material Plane. Moonstone dragons are detailed further in *Fizban's Treasury of Dragons*.

Pazrodine never stays in one place for long, and she wants to see all the wonders the Feywild and Material Plane have to offer. Curious Fey asked to join her caravan, and before long, she had a menagerie of merchants accompanying her on her travels. Pazrodine came to view these Fey merchants as her children. Their eager joy helps the dragon see the multiverse from new perspectives.

Map 14.1: Seelie Market

Vendors and Currency

The market's vendors are an eclectic mix of goblins, Fey, and awakened Beasts and Plants. Vendors don't accept coins or other typical currency. Instead, these merchants demand performances, answers to riddles, favors, or other intangibles.

Exploring the Market

The following locations appear on map 14.1.

Fruit Stalls

Scattered throughout Seelie Market are stalls brimming with ripe apples, apricots, grapes, mangoes, and other delicious fruit.

Goblins native to the Feywild run these stalls, calling out to visitors and tugging at their clothing to get their attention. The vendors explain that while a piece of fruit might look ordinary, it has wondrous and (mostly) beneficial properties.

When a creature eats a fey fruit, roll on the Fey Fruit Effects table below. If you have *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*, you can also use effects from the Magic Mushroom Effects table and the Primal Fruit Effects table. A creature affected by a fey fruit can't be affected by fey fruit again for 24 hours. If a fey fruit isn't consumed within 24 hours of its purchase, its magic expires and it rots. The merchants relate this information to anyone who buys a fruit, always downplaying potentially negative side effects.

Fey Fruit Effects

d10	Effect
1	Every 10 minutes, the creature must eat another fey fruit or make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, gaining 1 level of exhaustion on a failed save. Magic that ends the charmed condition cures the cravings, which otherwise end after 1 hour.
2	The creature turns a sickly green and has the poisoned condition for 1 hour.
3	The creature can't deliberately lie for 24 hours.
4	The creature can't understand any language for the next 8 hours.
5	The creature turns into a **faerie dragon**, as if by a *True Polymorph* spell that has a duration of 24 hours.
6	Regenerative bark covers the creature's skin, granting the effects of a *Barkskin* spell for 24 hours.
7	The creature and anything it is wearing or carrying become invisible for 24 hours. This invisibility ends early immediately after the creature attacks or casts a spell.
8	The creature gains the benefits of a *Speak with Animals* spell for 8 hours.
9	The creature gains 4d4 + 4 temporary hit points.
10	The creature sprouts dragonfly-like wings, gaining a flying speed of 30 feet for 1 hour.

Price

Characters must give a lock of their hair to buy a fey fruit. The goblin vendors don't specify what they need the hair for, but they give the hair to Granny Goosefinger, the hag who runs the doll shop (see the Antique Dolls section), in exchange for jewelry.

Card Collector

"Come one, come all!" A satyr wearing a velvet cloak beams at you from a stand full of card decks. He waves with a dramatic flourish, and a set of cards appears in his hand ... or did he pull it from his sleeve?

A **satyr** named Hugo Clovenhorn sells card decks from this stand, performing card tricks as he talks. He might pause a conversation to pull a card from behind a character's ear or to sneeze and send a flurry of cards spewing onto the table.

Hugo stocks multiple regular playing card decks featuring illustrations of Feywild and Material Plane locations the market has visited. He also might have an uncommon magic card deck for sale, such as a *Card Sharp's Deck* (see chapter 6), a *Deck of Wonder* (see chapter 7), or a *House of Cards* (see chapter 8).

Price

Hugo gives a deck of playing cards to anyone who can pull off a flawless card trick. A character attempting to impress Hugo must perform their trick and succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Each character can attempt this check once.

If the characters want to purchase a magic card deck, Hugo requires one of them to beat him in a card game; the party gets only one try. To play against Hugo, a character attempts three DC 15 checks: one Intelligence (Investigation) check, one Wisdom (Insight) check, and one Charisma (Deception) check. A character who's proficient with playing cards has advantage on these checks. If the character succeeds on one or no checks, Hugo wins. If the character succeeds on two or more checks, the character wins and is rewarded with one of the uncommon decks of magic cards listed above.

If a character loses the game, Hugo doesn't accept any more challengers from the party. He does, however, offer the party an alternative way to earn a deck of magic cards he has in stock. He explains he has always admired Merriweather the birdkeeper (see "Rare Birds"), but he has never mustered the courage to strike up a conversation with her. He asks the characters to get her to come over and talk to him. If the characters succeed, he gives them the magic card deck, but if they fail, he immediately calls off the effort.

Rare Birds

Cacophonous squawking comes from a stall marked by a pennant reading "Merriweather's Beautiful Birdies." A dryad hurries from birdcage to birdcage, feeding an array of feathered friends. "Now, now, settle down," she yells to an exceptionally loud parrot.

Merriweather the **dryad** showcases her collection of birds from this stand. She has owls, chickadees, hawks, hummingbirds, and more; thanks to spending time in the Feywild, they all have fanciful coloration and sing unusual melodies. Some sit in cages, while others hop around on open-air perches or fly around Merriweather.

Price

Merriweather gives a character one of her birds if the character serenades that bird with a song. A character who wants a particular bird can approach that bird and make a DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) or Charisma (Performance) check. On a successful check, they earn that bird's affection, and Merriweather gives that bird to the character. She will give only one bird to each character, but if characters fail to serenade a bird, they can keep trying with different birds until they succeed.

Matchmaking with Hugo

Merriweather has always admired Hugo Clovenhorn, but she hasn't acted on her feelings out of concern he doesn't feel the same way. Characters acting on Hugo's request to get an introduction to Merriweather can tell she reciprocates his feelings by succeeding on a DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check, and they find it easy to get her to visit him. Many methods might work, including conveying his interest in meeting her, pickpocketing something of hers and placing it by Hugo's card stand, or fabricating a reason for Merriweather and Hugo to meet.

Secondhand Trinkets

A lean dog with long, pointed ears sits in the middle of a giant rug, surrounded by trinkets. The dog looks up to you and smiles, his tongue lolling out of his mouth. "Secondhand bargains," he barks. "Best deals around!"

Secondhand items and other useless trinkets lie neatly arrayed across a giant rug. They belong to Clawson Blink, a **blink dog** that gained the ability to speak Common from a helpful druid long ago.

Clawson has ten items from the Trinkets table of the *Player's Handbook* for sale. He also has 1d4 items he markets as "today's secondhand steal," highlighting them to any visitors. You can determine these items by rolling on or choosing from the Secondhand Steals table.

Secondhand Steals

d8	Secondhand Steal
1	A pair of small, rose-tinted glasses with round lenses
2	A droopy potted plant in an old boot
3	A rusty metal goblet shaped like a frog opening its mouth to the sky
4	A wide-brimmed, palm-frond sunhat that has been chewed on
5	A utensil shaped like a fork on one end and a spoon on the other
6	A thick, sun-yellowed book on seasonal agriculture written in Halfling
7	A well-used squeaky toy in the shape of a garden gnome with a red hat
8	A glass statuette of a rust monster

Price

Clawson's rules are simple: a buyer can take any item from the rug, so long as they replace it with an item of similar value. What counts as "similar value" is up to Clawson. He's a very particular dog with very particular tastes, and he cares about an item's oddity or unusual story more than its usefulness.

Spell Scrolls

A table bears an assortment of little jars filled with tiny scrolls. A pixie no bigger than a human hand sits on a cushion beside the jars, using a small quill and inkwell to write on a scroll. She looks up at you through horn-rimmed glasses. "Can I help you?"

Lavender Shasphene is a studious and impatient **pixie** merchant who sells *Spell Scrolls* from this little table. She has five *Spell Scrolls* for sale.

Lavender's Spell Scrolls

Spell Level	Spell Scroll
1st	*Cure Wounds*, *Faerie Fire*
2nd	*Moonbeam*, *Protection from Poison*
3rd	*Antagonize**

*This spell appears in chapter 7.

Each of Lavender's scrolls is no bigger than a human thumb. Thanks to her minuscule handwriting, characters will need a magnifying glass to read one. They can purchase a magnifying glass from the Antique Doll Emporium, and Lavender directs a character there if an adventurer comments on her small handwriting.

Price

Lavender takes voices as payment. A character loses their voice for 10 minutes when they buy a 1st-level scroll, 1 hour when they buy a 2nd-level scroll, and 1 day when they buy a 3rd-level scroll; these durations are cumulative for characters who purchase multiple scrolls.

Whenever a voiceless character tries to speak or vocalize, they burp tiny bubbles instead. Lavender can mimic that character's voice perfectly for the duration of the effect, and she delights in doing so. A *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic ends this effect.

Fortune-Telling

A silver-colored tent stands near the market's center, marked with a banner bearing a colorful jester's hat surrounded by the words "Oddlewin's Tent of Many Fortunes."

When the characters walk through the flaps into the tent, read or paraphrase the following text:

Warm light glows from a single lantern in this otherwise dark tent, illuminating canvas walls decorated with patchwork iconography of comets, keys, knights, and more.

A small goblin sits cross-legged on the ground, wearing a blue hat and a lopsided smile. A stack of ivory cards lies before him. "Took you long enough!" the goblin says, beckoning you to sit.

This goblin is **Oddlewin**, a fortune teller. The ivory deck before him is a *Deck of Many Things* that he uses to read people's fates. The symbols on the tent's walls represent the deck's cards.

Oddlewin is a nilbog, a goblin possessed by a trickster spirit. If Oddlewin is slain, the trickster spirit flies from the tent to possess another goblin, who strolls back in and acts just as the old Oddlewin did, using Oddlewin's stat block.

Characters who succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check notice Oddlewin casts multiple shadows on the ground and the walls of the tent. These shadows are of Small and Medium size, and some have distinguishing features like horns, but their features are otherwise unclear. They seem to

move independently of Oddlewin's actions, but they remain connected to his feet.

Oddlewin's *Deck of Many Things* is a nine-card set containing the Comet, Fates, Fool, Key, Knight, Rogue, Ruin, Sage, and Throne cards. He stole this deck from a riffler in the Feywild many years ago (rifflers are presented in chapter 21). Oddlewin doesn't declare the number of card draws when he uses the deck for fortune-telling, so the cards' magical effects don't activate.

Price

Oddlewin will read any character's fortune if the character agrees to lend him their shadow. He tells the character their shadow will return to them when the fortune comes true. A firm handshake with Oddlewin seals the deal.

Fortune-Telling

To read a character's fortune, Oddlewin draws a single card from his nine-card deck and places it on the ground in front of him. The corresponding symbols on the tent's canvas walls glow briefly. After Oddlewin speaks the card's fortune, the character feels a chill run up their spine as their shadow gains a life of its own—untying itself from the character, leaping to Oddlewin, and joining the nilbog's other shadows. Oddlewin then removes that card from the deck for any subsequent readings for the party.

Fortunes

Card	Fortune
Comet	"Carry a lit flame with you at all times. You will be rewarded with wondrous treasure."
Fates	"You are fated to witness a terrible catastrophe. Take solace in knowing there is nothing you can do to stop it."
Fool	"Someone who seems helpless will call for your aid. Do not trust them."
Key	"A dream will bring answers to the questions you seek."
Knight	"Someone will offer you their services in a time of great need. Trust them."
Rogue	"A foe is hunting you. They seek vengeance and shall arrive soon."
Ruin	"You will soon lose something you hold dear."
Sage	"Give advice freely and often. It will save another's life in the near future, earning you their loyalty."
Throne	"Great responsibility shall be thrust upon you. Only you will know if you are ready."

Fortune Fulfillment

Look for ways to incorporate the characters' fortunes into your campaign. A character's shadow returns to them when the fortune comes to fruition, letting that character know this is the moment Oddlewin foresaw.

Here are some suggestions for fortune outcomes:

Comet. If the character keeps a candle, torch, lantern, or other flame or source of light in their vicinity as often as possible, that light eventually illuminates a *Bag of Holding* or another uncommon magic item in a hidden place.

Fates. The character sees a terrible fate befall another person. Ideally the character witnesses this alone or is the first to see it. For example, they might see a villain slaying an important NPC, a village being burned to the ground, or a catastrophic storm on the horizon.

Fool. An innocent-looking person or creature seems to need the characters' help but is a hungry monster in disguise. This might be a hag disguised as a child, a werewolf in wolf form whimpering and feigning injury by the side of the road, or a group of zombies made to look like starving travelers by a nefarious necromancer's *Seeming* spell. If you're using *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*, the monster might be an oblex.

Key. During a long rest, the character experiences a dream that gives them insights on their current quest. This could be a prophecy telling them where to go next, a vision of someone who can assist the party, or a wise figure who receives and answers questions in a manner similar to the *Divination* spell.

Knight. An NPC offers the party assistance at a crucial moment. This could be a champion jumping into combat when it looks like the characters might fail, a noble helping the party avoid a sticky situation with the law, or someone offering the characters a place to stay. This NPC asks for nothing in return and, if treated fairly, might even continue to help the party.

Rogue. Someone from the character's past appears, bent on revenge. This could be someone from the character's backstory, someone the character wronged on a previous quest, or a relative of someone the character killed or brought to ruin. This person might seek revenge in combat or through social sabotage.

Ruin. Something of value to this character that isn't on their person is stolen by burglars or a recurring villain. Alternatively, someone close to this character is kidnapped or killed.

Sage. If the character heeds this fortune and starts giving out unsolicited advice, that advice eventually saves someone's life, either by keeping that person from venturing into harm's way or by warning them against a disastrous financial decision. That person then helps the character in gratitude.

Throne. The character is given a leadership position on the council of a village, a guild, or an organization. Alternatively, a young creature—such as an owlbear cub or a griffon hatchling—is left in the character's care after the death of its parent.

Drawing from the Deck

Though Oddlewin doesn't offer this option unprompted, a character can cajole Oddlewin to let them declare a card draw from his *Deck of Many Things* and pull a card from the deck. Oddlewin secretly enjoys seeing the chaos creatures bring about by drawing from the deck. He allows each character to draw one card.

If you'd like to make the party work harder for their card draw, Oddlewin can ask them to find Mustardseed, a rambunctious young sprite who recently ran away from Seelie Market. If the characters find Mustardseed and bring him back, Oddlewin will let each of them draw a card from his *Deck of Many Things*.

Mustardseed has wandered through a nearby fey crossing into the Feywild, but the details of his predicament are up to you. Once the characters find and follow his trail, they might discover he's been captured by ettercaps or fomorians.

Oddlewin

Small Fey (Goblinoid), Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 21 (6d6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Skills Performance +4, Stealth +6
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Goblin, Sylvan
Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Fortune Teller. Oddlewin can cast the *Augury* spell as a ritual, using cards as the material component.

Nilbogism. Any creature that attempts to damage Oddlewin must first succeed on a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or have the charmed condition until the end of the creature's next turn. The creature must use its action praising Oddlewin.

Oddlewin can't regain hit points, including through magical healing, except through his Reversal of Fortune reaction.

Actions

Fool's Scepter. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Cloud of Cards. Oddlewin conjures magical cards that slash at the air in a 5-foot cube within 60 feet of Oddlewin until the start of Oddlewin's next turn. A creature that starts its turn in the cube or that enters that area for the first time on a turn takes 10 (4d4) slashing damage.

Spellcasting. Oddlewin casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12):

At will: *Mage Hand*, *Tasha's Hideous Laughter*

Bonus Actions

Nimble Escape. Oddlewin takes the Disengage or Hide action.

Reactions

Reversal of Fortune. In response to another creature dealing damage to Oddlewin, Oddlewin reduces the damage to 0 and regains 9 (2d8) hit points.

CRAIG J SPEARING

Antique Dolls

Shelves of antique dolls stand in the shade of a sickly green awning. Hunched over a small worktable is a wizened woman with warts, bedraggled gray hair, and sallow, green skin. She hums a haunting tune to herself, peering through a magnifying glass to paint a tiny pair of lips on a half-finished porcelain doll.

Granny Goosefinger, a **green hag**, makes and sells dolls here. Some dolls are made of porcelain, others of cloth. All have round, beady eyes and perfectly painted smiles. Granny Goosefinger also has three magnifying glasses, one spyglass, and ten mirrors for sale.

If any characters gave their hair to a merchant at the market's fruit stands, the party might see their hair already glued atop the heads of some of the dolls, perhaps crafted in the characters' own likenesses; Granny Goosefinger works fast. Though she puts most of the hair the goblins give her toward decorating the dolls, she saves a bit for *Scrying* spells or evil hag magic.

Granny Goosefinger refers to the characters in cloying terms like "dearie" or "my sweets." There's a calm, collected wickedness behind her smile.

Price

A character who wishes to buy a doll or a glass object must trade Granny Goosefinger three days' worth of good dreams. She seals this bargain by having the character prick their finger with one of her sewing needles.

A character who pays this price is plagued with nightmares of haunted dolls for 3 days. Every time the character finishes a long rest during that period, they must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the rest restores none of the character's Hit Dice. A *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic ends this effect.

I love Pazrodine! She and I are kindred spirits, in the best of ways. Our paths rarely cross, but I pay her a visit whenever I can.

Moonstone Dragon

When Seelie Market lands, its vendors gather rocks, leaves, and sticks to make an enormous nest for Pazrodine. (See the "Pazrodine" section at the beginning of this chapter for more information about the dragon.) She rests here while the market operates.

Pazrodine senses when theft occurs in Seelie Market. She makes her way to the perpetrators and neutralizes the situation nonviolently, usually by using her Dream Breath. Once troublemakers come to, Pazrodine politely but firmly asks them to leave the market. Those who object are flown out in her clutches.

If anyone comes to visit Pazrodine at her refuge, she greets them and happily answers their questions about the market. The dragon has a soothing voice and demeanor.

Lair Actions

The entire Seelie Market is Pazrodine's lair. Pazrodine's challenge rating is 22 (41,000 XP) when she's encountered in Seelie Market.

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties) while in her lair, Pazrodine can take one of the following lair actions; she can't take the same lair action two rounds in a row:

Banish into Dream. Pazrodine targets a creature she can see within 120 feet of herself and attempts to send that creature to a dream plane. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be banished to a harmless demiplane until initiative count 20 on the next round. While there, the target has the stunned condition. When the effect ends, the target reappears in the space it left or in the nearest unoccupied space.

Overwhelm the Senses. Pazrodine targets up to three creatures she can see within 30 feet of herself. The sounds, sights, and scents of the market intensify for these creatures, overwhelming them with bright colors, echoey chatters, and sweet smells. Each target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or have the incapacitated condition until the end of its next turn.

Whirlwind of Fruit. Fey fruit flies out from nearby carts, creating a whirlwind of fruit in a 10-foot-radius, 30-foot-high cylinder centered on a point within 60 feet of Pazrodine until initiative count 20 on the next round. When a creature enters the whirlwind's area for the first time on its turn or starts its turn there, it must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Pazrodine

Gargantuan Dragon (Moonstone), Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 330 (20d20 + 120)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Int +12, Wis +13, Cha +15
Skills Perception +13, Persuasion +15, Stealth +11
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Guardian of the Market. Pazrodine can sense when an item is stolen from Seelie Market. She knows the distance and direction to stolen items, as if by the *Locate Object* spell.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Pazrodine fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Pazrodine makes one Bite attack and two Claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) radiant damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or have the prone condition.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). Pazrodine uses one of the following breath weapons:

Dream Breath. Pazrodine exhales mist in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or have the unconscious condition for 10 minutes. This effect ends for a creature if the creature takes damage or someone uses an action to wake it.

Moonlight Breath. Pazrodine exhales a beam of moonlight in a 120-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in that area must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 60 (11d10) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spellcasting. Pazrodine casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 23):

At will: *Faerie Fire*
2/day each: *Calm Emotions*, *Dispel Magic*, *Invisibility*
1/day each: *Mass Cure Wounds*, *Revivify*

Legendary Actions

Pazrodine can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Pazrodine regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Tail. Pazrodine makes one Tail attack.
Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). Pazrodine uses Spellcasting.

CHAPTER 15

THRONE

A CHARACTER WHO DRAWS THE THRONE card from a *Deck of Many Things* gains ownership of a keep. But how big is the keep, and what are its defenses and layout? What lives in the keep now, and what must the characters do to secure it? This chapter, intended for DMs, presents Harrowhall, a castle plagued by an evil necromancer, as an example of such a keep. The Throne card doesn't need to appear in your game for Harrowhall to be useful; exploring the haunted castle makes an excellent single-session adventure, especially for characters in need of a place to recuperate between adventures.

Introducing Harrowhall

A character who draws the Throne card from a *Deck of Many Things* has a fleeting vision of a keep surrounded by a dry moat. Fog swirls across the grounds, and the castle appears abandoned by its owners. Instead of courtiers and guards, spectral figures appear behind narrow windows, and a huge serpentine creature slithers through its courtyard. Nevertheless, the stone walls are tall and undamaged, and an astronomical observatory boasting several telescopes surmounts the second floor of the inner structure. Harrowhall would make a fine stronghold for a group of adventurers, but it won't be easy to claim.

Place Harrowhall in a location appealing to the characters but also useful to your ongoing campaign. For example, the keep might be near a big city the characters like to visit, but also close to a crossroads that ensures travelers could appear at the castle's gate at any time. The keep might have always been in this location, avoided by locals thanks to the spirits that lurk there, or it might have been summoned by the magic of a *Deck of Many Things*. Regardless, the character who draws the Throne card knows where the keep is located and feels it tugging on their consciousness when their mind is quiet.

If you aren't using the *Deck of Many Things*, the characters can discover Harrowhall another way. Introduce the keep when your players are ready for their characters to have a stronghold they can call their own. The castle's fearsome reputation provides plenty of incentive for altruistic heroes to explore the site and put an end to the schemes of a ghostly necromancer, but if the characters have been talking about building a headquarters, they can drive off the ghosts that haunt Harrowhall and claim it for their own.

Harrowhall's Story

Years ago, a wizard named Gremorly drew the Throne card from a *Deck of Many Things*, gaining ownership of a small castle called Sovereign's Keep. Gremorly was a necromancer and misanthrope who had little patience for the living; he resolved to use the keep to create and house a ghostly army he would use to seize power. Gremorly performed a ritual that turned Sovereign Keep into a ghost trap: anyone who dies within the castle walls rises as an incorporeal spirit, trapped within the castle. Then, he waited. When adventurers came to investigate

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the seemingly abandoned keep, Gremorly murdered them and trapped their ghosts. But fortune recently turned against Gremorly when a behir entered the keep seeking a nest. It slew Gremorly, who became a victim of his own ritual.

Gremorly is now one of the many ghosts that haunt the keep. Locals have renamed the keep Harrowhall, as they dread the spectral figures moving through the fog there and the fierce lightning storms that erupt without warning. (The behir is the source of this lightning, but the locals don't know that.)

Adjusting for Party Level

Harrowhall is designed to be a challenge for four 8th-level characters who explore the keep in a single session. Decrease the challenge for characters lower than 8th level. Conversely, increase the challenge for groups with more than four characters, with characters higher than 8th level, or that revisit the keep over multiple sessions.

Decreasing the Challenge

If Harrowhall is too challenging for your group, but you want the characters to have a keep, you can use these strategies to decrease the difficulty:

Temporary Hit Points. When the characters agree to aid a group of ghosts, those ghosts grant each character 1d4 + 19 temporary hit points, in a manner similar to a 4th-level casting of the *False Life* spell.

Fewer Monsters. Reduce the number of shadow demons and phase spiders in the keep, using the rules for encounter building in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to create an appropriate challenge.

Weaker Construct. The stone golem in area 4 can be replaced with a clay golem, a shield guardian, or another weaker Construct.

Ghostly Allies. When the characters battle the behir, their ghostly allies harry and distract the creature, giving it disadvantage on attack rolls and giving the characters advantage on their attack rolls.

Gremorly at Rest. If the characters end Gremorly's ghost trap ritual, he immediately departs for his eternal rest, along with most of the other ghosts.

Increasing the Challenge

If Harrowhall isn't sufficiently challenging for your group, here are ways to make it more difficult:

Deadly Gloom. The keep's ghostly gloom affects the characters as they explore. Characters in the keep have disadvantage on death saving throws, and all forms of healing (including finishing short and long rests) restore only half as many hit points as usual.

Countdown. Introduce a countdown to keep the characters from taking too many short rests. Gremorly is trying to break his ritual with a new one that takes 3 hours to complete. The other ghosts know his plan and inform the characters of it. If the characters can't free the spirits in 3 hours, the new ritual fails disastrously, causing the entire castle to collapse.

More Behirs. The behir has attracted a mate to its nest. Alternatively, you can supplement the behir with its spawn: less powerful versions of the creature that are Large instead of Huge.

More Actions for Gremorly. Give Gremorly legendary actions and lair actions.

Exploring Harrowhall

Keep the following information in mind while the characters explore the haunted keep.

Ghost Trap

Gremorly's ritual forces any Humanoid who dies within the keep to return as a ghost that's unable to pass beyond the keep's walls. The ritual can be broken by disassembling, moving, or destroying all three ritual rods, which the necromancer placed in the armory (area 3), the kitchen (area 7), and the observatory (area 15). Each rod is protected by a *Glyph of Warding*. Once the ghost trap is broken, all the ghosts in the keep can leave except Gremorly, who remains to haunt the observatory.

Side Effects

When the characters first arrive at Harrowhall, a thick and unsettling fog covers the grounds and many of the castle's rooms. The fog is a side effect of the ritual. As long as Gremorly's ritual remains in effect, the keep remains cold, foggy, and inhospitable.

Trapped Ghosts

Three groups of adventurers who dared to explore Harrowhall were killed by Gremorly and are now trapped in the keep. Fate's Devout are in the dining hall (area 6), the Spellseekers are in the eastern bedrooms (area 10), and the Gloved Hand are in the crypt (area 14). Each group can be customized to fit your campaign; for example, Fate's Devout might serve a prominent deity of fate in your setting, the Spellseekers might be Red Wizards of Thay, and the Gloved Hand might be Harpers.

The ghosts all hide from Gremorly. Although they know of the necromancer and the presence of other ghosts, they have forgotten most of what they knew in life, recalling little beyond the mission that brought them to the keep. The ghosts aren't hostile and act as allies to characters willing to help them. Destroying the ghosts is difficult, as they remain on the Border Ethereal and can't affect—or be affected by—anything on the Material Plane. The ghosts defend themselves if the characters attack them.

Behir

A behir has made its nest in the keep's watchtower (area 2), but the monster hunts throughout the keep. Characters might spot it at any time, and it might test their strength in a brief encounter before retreating to attack again later. If the characters take their time and the adventure needs more excitement, the behir could attack and fight to the death.

The behir knows the corridors of the keep so well that it can move through a 10-foot-wide space, as well as any door in the keep, without squeezing.

Harrowhall Features

Unless otherwise stated, Harrowhall has the following features:

Ceilings. Rooms in the keep have 10-foot ceilings.

Light. Most rooms in the keep have windows, so they are brightly lit during the day and dimly lit at night. Torches are mounted along the keep's interior walls, but they aren't lit.

Scrying Barrier. Before putting his necromantic plans in motion, Gremorly placed runes around the keep's outer walls that block certain kinds of divination magic. Creatures outside the keep's exterior walls can't scry into the keep. However, creatures inside the keep can scry inside it or beyond the walls. This effect lingers even if Gremorly's ritual ghost trap is dismantled.

Harrowhall Locations

Harrowhall has held up well in the centuries since its creation, apart from a few missing stones and shattered windows due to recent neglect.

The following areas in Harrowhall are keyed to map 15.1.

1: Moat and Walls

A 30-foot-high wall borders Harrowhall, surrounded by a 20-foot-wide, 15-foot-deep, dry moat. The drawbridge is down, and the portcullis is up. Read or paraphrase the following if the characters get close enough to see into the moat:

> The bottom of the dry moat is littered with bones as well as complete skeletons, many still wearing rusted armor or tattered robes.

Gremorly dumped the corpses of those he killed into the moat. A character who examines these remains and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices some skeletons have matching emblems on their clothing or gear, perhaps indicating the bearers belonged to the same organization. If you have decided the dead adventurers belonged to well-known organizations like the Harpers or Red Wizards of Thay, the symbols of those groups can be found among the corpses.

The haunted castle of Harrowhall awaits adventurers brave enough to claim it.

Treasure. Gremorly left treasure on the bodies of his victims to lure more people into the castle. Searching the corpses uncovers 750 gp, 50 pp, and a jeweled ring worth 250 gp.

Crossing the Moat. The characters can use the drawbridge to cross the moat. They can instead clamber through the moat with more time and effort. No check is required, but it's a grisly detour, and the moat is difficult terrain.

Portcullis. The portcullis is up, and nothing prevents entry to the keep. The mechanism to lower the portcullis is in area 2. Were the portcullis to be dropped, lifting it manually would require a successful DC 22 Strength (Athletics) check.

Scaling the Walls. The castle's walls are high and difficult to climb. Creatures trying to climb the walls must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or fall.

2: Watchtower

Any furniture that once stood in this room has been ground to splinters by the behir that has claimed this tower as its nest. The behir isn't here when the characters enter the keep; it prowls the keep, looking for a fresh meal.

Stairs ascend 30 feet to a second floor that is even with the keep's battlements. This upper room is filled with levers and pulleys that control the drawbridge and portcullis mechanisms. A creature can use an action to raise or lower the drawbridge or the portcullis in area 1.

3: Armory

This room is filled with shortswords, crossbows, shields, and maces placed here by the folk who owned the keep before Gremorly.

Ritual Rod. Set into a metal tripod in the center of the room is a 3-foot-long metal rod decorated with runes and glowing with necromantic magic. The entire assembly weighs 8 pounds. This is one of three rods Gremorly set up to turn Harrowhall into a ghost trap. If the rod is removed from its tripod or destroyed, the necromantic energy fades and the rod becomes nonmagical. The rod and tripod assembly has AC 19, 5 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

The rod is protected with a *Glyph of Warding*; if anyone comes within 5 feet of the rod or anything touches it, explosive runes on the rod fill the room with acid. All creatures in the room must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 5d8 acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once the glyph has gone off, or if it is dispelled, the ritual rod can be safely moved, destroyed, or disassembled. The glyph doesn't activate if the rod is moved without anyone touching it or approaching it, such as by using the *Mage Hand* cantrip. Knocking the rod over by throwing an object at it triggers the explosive runes.

4: Courtyard

This open-air courtyard connects the keep's entrance to various other buildings on the grounds.

Stables. These stables contain saddles and other equipment hanging on the walls, but no animals; the behir ate Gremorly's horse.

Statue. A Large statue of Istus, a god of fate and the creator of the first *Deck of Many Things*, stands in the center of the courtyard. She's depicted as a solemn-faced woman holding a spread of cards. The statue is a **stone golem** intended to protect the keep for its rightful owners—who might be the characters, thanks to the magic of the *Deck of Many Things*. But Gremorly's ghostly presence has confused the golem, and it doesn't recognize the characters as the keep's new owners. If the characters approach the golem, it frees itself from its plinth with a deep cracking sound and attacks until destroyed. However, if the characters destroy Gremorly's ghost and this golem is still intact, it becomes their ally and defends this courtyard on their behalf.

5: Crypt Entrance

This room is mostly empty. One outer wall has a stained-glass window. Stairs lead to the crypt below. If the characters haven't encountered the Gloved Hand (area 14) yet, they hear the faint echo of an argument coming from below.

6: Dining Hall

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters reach this room:

> A long, oaken dining table spans this room, and an empty fireplace sits in one corner. Cobwebs stretch across the room's large window. Floating above the dining table are the ghostly figures of three dwarves: one wearing vestments and two in sturdy armor. They murmur to each other in somber tones.

In life, the three **ghosts** were an adventuring party known as Fate's Devout. Wielding divine magic, they traveled across the realm to carry out Istus's will. They came to this keep because they heard it was holy to Istus, but Gremorly killed them.

The ghosts are alarmed by the unholy magic gathering in the keep's chapel (area 11), a side effect of Gremorly's ghost trap ritual being unsupervised for so long. They want to purify the chapel and escape the keep, but they're afraid of Gremorly. When the characters arrive, the ghosts are debating their next course of action, which is made difficult by the

fact that the ghosts remember only the most recent events clearly.

The leader of Fate's Devout is Moira Stonehearth, who was a priest in life. The other members are Gunter Granitefist and Ragar Onyx. When the three notice the characters, Moira asks for aid. She tries to be warm and friendly, but her imprisonment in Harrowhall has damaged her memory. She explains that none of the ghosts can escape the keep or pass on due to a ritual performed by a powerful necromancer who lives here. Moira doesn't know Gremorly's name or that he is dead. She knows the keep holds other ghosts but knows nothing else about them.

Moira asks the characters to go with her and her companions to the chapel and defend them from the evil magic there while they attempt to reconsecrate it. She hopes reconsecrating the chapel to Istus will break the ritual and allow the ghosts to move on, but it won't. Moira can teach the consecration ritual to anyone who speaks Dwarvish, but she offers only if asked. Teaching the ritual takes an hour. See area 11 for more on performing the consecration ritual.

These dwarves know the location of the chapel (area 11) and can lead the characters there if the characters agree to help. Otherwise, the ghosts won't leave the dining hall.

7: Kitchen and Pantry

This room has several ovens and cupboards full of old pots, pans, and utensils. A pantry at one end holds rotted supplies.

Ritual Rod. A second ritual rod, identical to the one in the armory (area 3), stands in the center of the kitchen. This rod is also protected by a *Glyph of Warding*, but if triggered, the explosive runes deal cold damage instead of acid damage.

Treasure. A character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check or spends half an hour searching the pantry finds an *Alchemy Jug* among a few bags of spoiled flour on the floor.

8: Western Bedrooms

These bedrooms are mostly empty, save for bedside tables and musty beds. The sole inhabitant of these rooms is Gus, Gremorly's old black cat, who was killed by the behir and now is a Tiny **ghost**. Gus is friendly to anyone who offers him food, even if he can't eat it, and he follows the characters as they explore the keep, meowing whenever doing so won't alert an enemy. (Gus might be old, but he still knows how to hunt.)

Treasure. Gremorly slept in the southernmost bedroom. A diary on the bedside table details his life and wicked agenda. Several references to a book titled *Exploring Arcanum* make it clear the ghost trap ritual can be found in that book. In one passage, Gremorly gloats over attuning himself to a *Staff of Withering*.

A food bowl on the floor is inscribed with Gus's name. In addition, a *Potion of Growth* has rolled under the bed.

9: Throne Room and Study

Huge stained-glass windows grace the walls of this room. Its vaulted ceiling is 20 feet tall. Thrones, each inscribed with a character's name, sit at the far end of the room in a semicircle. A small room to the west is for private meetings and is furnished with a couch, chairs, and cabinets.

Two **helmed horrors**—one in the southeast corner and one in the southwest—stand guard in the throne room. While motionless, they look like ordinary suits of armor, but when the characters enter the room, the horrors animate and attack. Like the golem in the courtyard, these constructs guard the keep on behalf of its rightful owners but the presence of Gremorly's spirit confuses them. If the characters defeat Gremorly and these helmed horrors have not yet been destroyed, they become allies to the characters and defend this room on their behalf.

Treasure. If a character drew the Throne card from a *Deck of Many Things*, a golden circlet rests on that character's throne. This circlet has the powers of a *Helm of Telepathy*. One of the cabinets in the study includes twelve bottles of rare wine, each worth 25 gp.

10: Eastern Bedrooms

Read or paraphrase the following when a character opens the door to one of the bedrooms:

> A sparse bedroom contains a bed with a moth-eaten blanket and a side table. Levitating a few inches off the bed is a cross-legged ghost wearing light robes, seemingly meditating. The ghost's eyes snap open.
>
> "We have visitors," the ghost calls out. "And they are alive." Before long, five other ghosts pass through the walls of the room, dressed in similar attire. They look at you curiously.

In life, the six **ghosts** were a group of traveling scholars called the Spellseekers. Two of the Spellseekers were human, one was a dwarf, one was an elf, and two were dragonborn. Their leader, a dragonborn ghost named Patrin Umbyrphrax, calmly asks the characters what brings them to the keep. Patrin explains that he and his colleagues sought a book called *Exploring Arcanum*, known to be in the possession of a necromancer named Gremorly. Rather than granting their request and letting them read the book, Gremorly killed them and trapped

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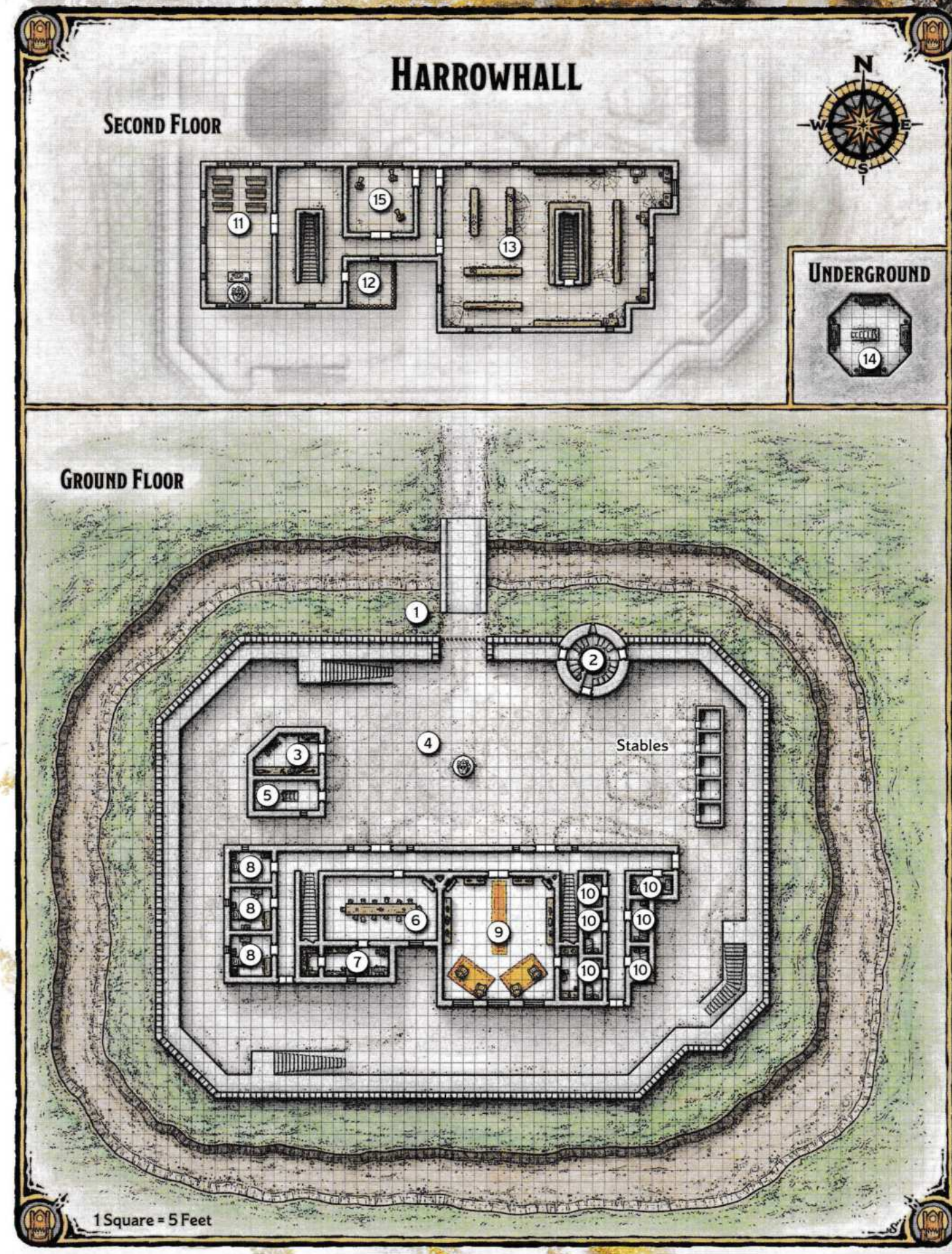

MAP 15.1: HARROWHALL

HARROWHALL HIDES MORE THAN ONE DEADLY SECRET.

them as ghosts with a ritual. Patrin remembers little—his memory is fading due to his Undead status—but he is certain the details of the ghost trap ritual could be found in *Exploring Arcanum*, which he last saw in the keep's library. The Spellseekers don't know any other details of the ghost trap ritual, nor do they know that Gremorly is dead.

Patrin knows where the library is and offers to guide the characters to it. He warns them it's home to a nest of phase spiders, which travel the Ethereal Plane and can destroy ghosts. Patrin tells the characters that if they defeat the phase spiders, they can get the book and use it to break Gremorly's ritual, releasing the ghosts trapped in Harrowhall.

11: Chapel

This chapel is dedicated to Istus, the god of fate who created the first *Deck of Many Things*. Gremorly's ghost trap ritual has persisted so long without his supervision that necromantic energies have begun to gather in the chapel, corrupting it.

A statue of Istus, surrounded by a web of multicolored threads, stands behind an altar in the southern part of the room. The altar emits a pulsating dark haze; anyone who touches the altar takes 17 (5d6) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain 1 level of exhaustion. Shadows fill the corners of the room; a light source that usually provides bright light provides only dim light within the chapel, and a light source that normally provides dim light is useless.

Reconsecrating the Altar. The corruption of this chapel persists even if Gremorly's ritual is broken. But the members of Fate's Devout—the ghostly adventurers in the dining hall (area 6)—know a ritual to purify the place. They tried it once but were attacked by "unholy beings" and fled. If the characters bring Fate's Devout back to the chapel, they'll try this ritual again, asking the characters to protect them from harm.

The three ghosts gather around the altar, chanting an ancient prayer in Dwarvish. They must stay on the Material Plane for the duration of the ritual. Shortly after the ghosts begin praying, three **shadow demons** seep from the corners of the room. The demons attack the ghosts, but a demon that's attacked by a character shifts its focus to that character. When two shadow demons are killed, the remaining one flees. After 3 rounds, if all the ritual's participants are still chanting, the ritual succeeds, and the necromancy suffusing the chapel vanishes. If a ghost is reduced to 0 hit points, a character trained in the ritual can replace the fallen ghost, but the character must stand adjacent to the altar and

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use their action each round for the remainder of the ritual to chant the necessary incantations. If the ritual fails, surviving members of Fate's Devout can try again, but they might need further help from the characters, as three participants are required.

12: Balcony

This balcony overlooks the keep's rear courtyard. If the characters have not yet encountered the **behir**, it is lurking between the kitchen and throne room when they emerge. Characters must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to avoid being surprised by the behir when it attacks. The behir fights to the death, defending its hunting grounds.

13: Library

Three **phase spiders** lair in this room and attack any creature that enters.

This spiderweb-covered library contains hundreds of books in genres ranging from history and religion to speculative fiction. Gremorly added his impressive personal collection to the library, including many rare tomes on necromancy, but most of the books were here when he arrived. The patches of webbing on the floor are difficult terrain. These webs burn up instantly when touched by flame, but flames could also set the library on fire.

Exploring Arcanum. Once the characters deal with the phase spiders, they—or the Spellseekers from area 10—can search for *Exploring Arcanum*, a book from Gremorly's collection that includes the ritual he used to make his ghost trap. Characters can find the tome with 10 minutes of careful searching. The book explains how the ritual rods must be placed and how to safely move them; any character who reads this ritual can move or dismantle the ritual rods without triggering their *Glyphs of Warding*.

14: Crypt

Three **ghosts** bicker in this small crypt. Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter the crypt:

> Angry shouts echo through this subterranean room. Two ghosts dressed in matching black outfits pace in the air, pointing at each other. The human ghost says, "You were supposed to stab him in the back while I distracted him!"
>
> "Well, it's not so easy to stab someone when you're being eaten by zombies!" retorts the halfling ghost.
>
> A tiefling ghost holds its severed head in its hands. "The only thing worse than being dead," it says wearily, "is being dead with the two of you."

These are the ghosts of the Gloved Hand, professional thieves who tried to rob Gremorly's keep. The necromancer killed them, and they've been arguing over who is to blame ever since. They're not sure how long it has been, as they can barely remember anything before they arrived at the keep. Their only solace has been watching the behir kill Gremorly. They know his ghost is trapped here, too.

The ghosts initially ignore the characters, but they notice if the characters take dramatic action to gain their attention. Kilea Ondren, the ghost of the tiefling woman who led the Gloved Hand, explains the group's predicament. (Her subordinates blame each other for their deaths, and they interrupt constantly.) The members of the Gloved Hand know nothing about the ghost trap ritual and have no advice about how they might be freed. The ghosts know that Gremorly mostly kept to the observatory before he was eaten by the behir, and that's where his ghost can probably be found.

15: Observatory

This room has a domed glass ceiling and contains three large standing telescopes, each covered in dust. A large, round table in the middle of the room bears old, faded maps that depict the Sky of Many Things (see chapter 13). A staff leans against the table, and a book lies atop it (see the "Treasure" section below).

Ritual Rod. A third ritual rod, identical to the one in the armory (see area 3), stands in the northwest corner of the room. This rod is also protected by a *Glyph of Warding*, but if triggered, the explosive runes deal fire damage instead of acid damage.

Gremorly's ghost (see the accompanying stat block) haunts the observatory. He appears as a translucent human figure wearing trousers, shoes, a long coat with wide sleeves, and a wizard's hat. He has a long beard and bushy eyebrows, and he carries a ghostly staff. Gremorly has forgotten the circumstances of his death and goes about his business as if he were still alive. He moves from one telescope to another, occasionally consulting the astronomical charts on the table or checking the ritual rod. He doesn't notice the characters unless they interact with him or the ritual rod. If the characters draw his attention, he snickers with glee. "More fodder for my ghost army," he says, raising his staff. "I hope you've made peace with your gods." Gremorly fights until he is destroyed.

Treasure. The staff Gremorly holds is a spectral reflection of his real *Staff of Withering*, which leans against the table. Gremorly's spellbook lies on the table with the maps. It contains numerous spells, about half of which are necromancy spells, including all the spells in his stat block.

Escaping the Ghost Trap

When all three ritual rods are dismantled or destroyed, the ritual that traps the ghosts in Harrowhall ends. The thick fog that surrounds the keep lifts, and the ghosts can depart. A few might offer to remain, depending on their interactions with the characters:

Kilea Ondren. Kilea's subordinates continue squabbling as they fade into the afterlife, but Kilea remains. She says she sees promise in the keep and the characters, and she wants to help rebuild and protect the place. Kilea offers to serve as the keep's groundskeeper and protector, lingering especially in the crypt.

Moira Stonehearth. If the chapel hasn't been reconsecrated, Moira stays to teach the characters the ritual to end the corruption there. Either way, she wants to ensure the chapel never falls into the wrong hands again, and she offers to safeguard it and act as the keep's resident priest.

Patrin Umbyrphrax. Most of the Spellseekers move into the afterlife, but Patrin remains. He's amazed at the library's collection and asks to be its steward so he can protect it and share its knowledge with others.

Gus. If any of the characters showed the ghost cat any affection, Gus remains in the keep. He uses his Horrifying Visage ability to scare rodents and other pests to death, eating their ghosts and depositing their physical remains on a character's pillow. He refuses to venture beyond the keep's grounds, but—between naps—defends the keep against all intruders.

> Ghost cats are just as sweet, mischievous, and playful as their living counterparts. Euryale and I almost adopted one, but he kept trying to hunt Euryale's hair.

Gremorly's Ghost

Medium Undead, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 82 (15d8 + 15)
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (–2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +8, History +8
Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Giant
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

Ethereal Sight. Gremorly can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Incorporeal Movement. Gremorly can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. He takes 5 (1d10) force damage if he ends his turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Gremorly fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. Gremorly makes three Withering Strike attacks.

Withering Strike. *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d12) necrotic damage.

Fell Necromancy. Gremorly targets one creature he can see within 60 feet of himself. The target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 61 (7d8 + 30) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. In addition, Gremorly regains 9 (2d8) hit points.

Possession (Recharge 6). One Humanoid Gremorly can see within 5 feet of himself must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by him; Gremorly disappears, and the target has the incapacitated condition and loses control of its body. Gremorly can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn Undead, and he retains his alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to the charmed and frightened conditions. He otherwise uses the target's game statistics, but Gremorly doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the target drops to 0 hit points, Gremorly ends it as a bonus action, or Gremorly is turned or forced out by an effect like the *Dispel Evil and Good* spell. When the possession ends, Gremorly reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target. The target is immune to this Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Spellcasting. Gremorly casts one of the following spells, using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16):

At will: *Dancing Lights, Mage Hand, Prestidigitation*
2/day each: *Bestow Curse, Dispel Magic*
1/day: *Slow*

Bonus Actions

Ethereal Step (Recharge 4–6). Gremorly teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space he can see.

CHAPTER 16

RUIN

TRADITIONALLY, THE RUIN CARD CAUSES individuals who draw the card to lose their wealth. This chapter, intended for the DM, reinterprets this card as physical ruins to be explored: the ruins of Gardmore Abbey.

This adventure location was first described in *Madness at Gardmore Abbey*, a boxed adventure for D&D's fourth edition. In that adventure, Gardmore Abbey was located in the Nentir Vale, and the site had ties to the minotaur empire below Thunderspire Mountain. You, however, can situate the ruin and the fortified hill it sits atop anywhere in your campaign world. The layout of Gardmore Abbey was inspired by a real fortress atop the French island Mont-Saint-Michel, so you might place the ruins on a similar island accessible only by a narrow path that's underwater at high tide.

Regardless of where you place Gardmore Abbey, you can use the site to introduce a *Deck of Many Things* to your campaign. The deck lies in the hoard of Mekkalath, a powerful dragon, who nests in the ruins. Few heroes are brave enough to face Mekkalath in battle, though resourceful characters can obtain the deck in other ways. But once the deck is in their possession, their troubles have just begun.

HISTORY OF GARDMORE ABBEY

A thousand years ago, minotaurs built a temple to Bahamut and other gods of good under a towering hill. But a cult dedicated to the demon lord Baphomet infiltrated the temple, and its members gradually took over the temple's leadership. When the cultists revealed their worship of Baphomet, the minotaurs dedicated to Bahamut rose up to reclaim the temple. After a bloody conflict, the survivors fled, leaving the temple abandoned.

Hundreds of years later, monastic knights chose the hill for their order's home and began building a defensive structure atop the site. A massive wall surrounded much of the hill, leaving only its impassible western face unguarded. The knights built an abbey, a barrack, a memorial hall, and more at the summit of the hill, and dug catacombs in which to bury the order's honored dead. While excavating these catacombs, the knights discovered the minotaur temple. The captain of the order sealed the minotaur ruins to keep them secret.

As decades passed, a village grew within the fortress's outer wall, and the knights became a local power. They warred against wicked foes, including followers of the serpent god Zehir and an infamous hobgoblin warlord, whose infernal stronghold they sacked, carrying away many trophies—including a *Deck of Many Things*. The legendary magic item was hidden in the vaults and warded with powerful spells to prevent its detection and theft.

But five hundred years ago, a vengeful army laid siege to the abbey. The outcome of the battle was still in doubt when the captain of the abbey, Havarr Nenlast, drew from the *Deck of Many Things* in an attempt to turn the tide. When he drew the Skull card, the terrifying Undead created by that card (see chapter 19) detected the deck at last. Within minutes, more Undead arrived at the abbey and began

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slaughtering everyone in their path. Havarr and the other knights of the abbey were killed, along with most of the invaders, and the deck was scattered.

Centuries passed. Refugees from the besieging army settled in the ruined village on the hill's lower slopes, but in time they returned home. Mekkalath, a young red dragon, claimed the catacombs under the abbey as his lair. Adventurers reassembling the scattered deck killed a beholder trapped in the abbey's watchtower, but Mekkalath drove the adventurers off and seized the deck.

Eventually Mekkalath outgrew the vaults. Eager to show off his glory, he moved his hoard—which now included a *Deck of Many Things*—to the surface ruins. The hill was gradually transformed by his magical nature, birthing lava flows, plumes of flame, and clouds of smoke.

A short time ago, a comet streaked across the sky above the abbey, signifying fell portents. The comet's otherworldly energy brought the slain beholder back as a death tyrant and drew the attention of minotaur scholars hoping to uncover the ancient temple beneath the abbey. Individuals throughout the multiverse who seek a *Deck of Many Things* now look to the ruins of Gardmore Abbey.

Exploring the Ruins

Adventurers might come to the ruins of Gardmore Abbey for many reasons. They might be hired by minotaur archaeologists to serve as guards or troubleshooters. They might be hunting Mekkalath, whose depredations threaten everyone for hundreds of miles around his lair. They might be drawn by the foreboding comet that recently streaked over the site. Scholars remember the keep's connection to the *Deck of Many Things*; anyone seeking the deck could be drawn to the abbey, heedless of danger.

The site is a sandbox that encourages exploration, roleplaying with multiple factions, and potentially pitting them against each other. The minotaurs aren't aggressive, and their camp can serve as a home base for characters who approach them peacefully. A githyanki delegation based in a tower in the village might see the characters as a path to earning Mekkalath's goodwill. Heroes might confront the death tyrant trapped within the abbey's tower, draw it into a fight with Mekkalath, or ignore it completely. Stubborn angels, salamander servitors, and a trio of hags all create further complications.

The threats on the hill span a wide range of difficulty; low- and moderate-level characters will need to rely on diplomacy, stealth, and trickery to claim the deck, while high-level characters might stride boldly into Mekkalath's lair and challenge the dragon directly. Most monsters infesting the ruins of Gardmore Abbey won't pursue characters who retreat from the hill to tend their wounds. Characters have the opportunity to return another day, with a new plan to defeat Mekkalath and obtain the deck.

Random Encounters

Use the Ruin Encounters table for characters traveling the slopes of the hill or its surroundings.

Ruin Encounters

1d12	Encounter
1	Animals—such as a **brown bear**, **giant owl**, or pack of 2d6 **wolves**—attack, made vicious by the effect of Baphomet's temple deep under the hill.
2	2d4 **minotaur archaeologists** (their stat block appears in this chapter) explore the hill, looking for artifacts and places to dig.
3	1d6 **minotaur infiltrators** are performing a bloody rite to Baphomet; if there are six, one is their leader, **Brusipha** (both stat blocks appear in this chapter). If discovered, the minotaurs attack to conceal their activity from outsiders.
4	1d3 **displacer beasts**, pets of the green hags, are on the prowl; alternatively, use **yeth hounds** from *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*.
5	A plaintive howl echoes over the hill. Characters who succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check identify the source as the collapsed bell tower in the Feygrove, where a young **displacer beast** is trapped.
6	A **green hag** from the coven hidden in the Feygrove is on a mysterious errand. If she detects the adventurers before they spot her, the hag uses Illusory Appearance to conceal herself as a dryad and invites the characters to the Feygrove, then returns to her coven and sets a trap for the characters.
7	Vegetation on the hillside has grown into a hedge maze due to the magical influence of Baphomet's temple. Navigating the maze requires 1 hour and a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check.
8	Mekkalath's presence prompts a fiery eruption. Creatures in a 5-foot-radius, 20-foot-high cylinder must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (5d6) fire damage.
9	1d3 **fire elementals** drawn from the Elemental Plane of Fire by Mekkalath's aura wander the hill.
10	Spiders from the Feygrove are on the prowl; they include 2d4 **giant spiders** plus either 1d3 **phase spiders** or 1 **ruin spider** (see chapter 21).
11	A lone **githyanki warrior** hunts for tonight's meal.
12	A **red slaad**, dropped here by the comet that recently overflew the site, searches the hill for any way to lift the wards around the watchtower.

Map 16.1: Ruins of Gardmore Abbey

The minotaur archaeologists at the ruins are potential allies.

Gardmore Abbey Locations

The ruined abbey is too expansive to be completely detailed here. Instead, an overview of each area summarizes the terrain and any threats to be found there. Create specific encounters based on the actions your characters take, using the monsters listed and adding additional ones as you think appropriate. Two maps are provided: map 16.1, an overview of the entire ruined abbey, and map 16.2, a more detailed map of Mekkalath's lair at the top of the hill.

Outer Wall, Abandoned Village, and Ruined Keep

The ancient remains of a 30-foot-high stone wall stand along three sides of the hill, ending at the impassibly steep and rugged western slope. The wall suffered damage from the siege centuries ago but is otherwise intact, if overgrown.

Within the wall, on the northeast side of the hill, are the ruins of an abandoned village that was destroyed during the siege. Signs of the siege remain: catapult stones lodged in buildings and heat-cracked stone walls blackened with soot. At one end of the village, near the shattered main gate, stand the ruins of a keep.

Minotaur Archaeologist

Medium Humanoid, Any Alignment

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Arcana +3, History +5, Perception +5, Religion +3
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Labyrinthine Recall. The minotaur can perfectly recall any path it has traveled.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the minotaur moved at least 10 feet straight toward the target immediately before it hit, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) piercing damage, and if the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet from the minotaur and have the prone condition.

Minotaur Infiltrator

Medium Humanoid, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	8 (–1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Perception +7, Religion +1
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Abyssal, Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Labyrinthine Recall. The minotaur can perfectly recall any path it has traveled.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage while enlarged. If the minotaur moved at least 10 feet straight toward the target immediately before it hit, the target takes an extra 4 (1d8) piercing damage, or 9 (2d8) piercing damage if the minotaur is enlarged. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet from the minotaur and have the prone condition.

Mattock. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or 17 (2d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage while enlarged. If the target is a creature and the minotaur is enlarged, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or have the prone condition.

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the minotaur magically increases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the minotaur is Large, doubles its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the minotaur lacks the room to become Large, the minotaur doesn't change size.

Bonus Actions

Unerring Tracker. The minotaur magically creates a psychic link with one creature it can see. For the next hour, the minotaur knows the current distance and direction to the target if it is on the same plane of existence. The link ends if the minotaur has the incapacitated condition or uses this ability on a different target.

Brusipha

Medium Humanoid (Minotaur, Warlock), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wisdom +5, Charisma +5
Skills Deception +5, Perception +7, Religion +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Abyssal, Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Demonic Ritual. Brusipha can spend 3 hours performing a ritual that summons 1d3 + 1 **barlguras** or 1 **hezrou**. She must sacrifice a Medium or larger living creature to Baphomet during this ritual, and the ritual can be performed only at night. The demons vanish at dawn.

Labyrinthine Recall. Brusipha can perfectly recall any path she has traveled.

Actions

Multiattack. Brusipha makes two Eldritch Blast attacks.

Eldritch Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) force damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage. If Brusipha moved at least 10 feet straight toward the target immediately before she hit, the target takes an extra 4 (1d8) piercing damage, and if the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet from Brusipha and have the prone condition.

Incite the Hunters (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Brusipha allows each ally within 30 feet of herself that has the Unerring Tracker trait to make one weapon attack as a reaction against the target of that ally's Unerring Tracker.

Spellcasting. Brusipha casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

At will: *Prestidigitation, Speak with Animals*
1/day each: *Bestow Curse, Command, Crown of Madness*

Bonus Actions

Unerring Tracker. Brusipha magically creates a psychic link with one creature she can see. For the next hour, Brusipha knows the current distance and direction to the target if it is on the same plane of existence. The link ends if Brusipha has the incapacitated condition or uses this ability on a different target.

Reactions

Baphomet's Blessing. When Brusipha reduces a hostile creature to 0 hit points, she gains 8 temporary hit points.

The village isn't empty, however. Two dozen **minotaur archaeologists** (their stat block appears in this chapter) recently arrived and set up a camp among the ruins. These archaeologists seek to excavate the minotaur temple said to lie beneath the hill.

Accompanying the archaeologists are two domesticated **gorgons** used as beasts of burden and six **minotaur infiltrators** (their stat block appears in this chapter) devoted to Baphomet who are posing as laborers. Their leader, **Brusipha** (her stat block appears in this chapter), intends to let the archaeologists find the temple; then she'll murder them and seize the site for her cult. The cultists meet in the ruined keep, which the archaeologists consider too unsafe to explore. None of the archaeologists suspect Brusipha or her followers.

The minotaur archaeologists aren't violent and have no weapons, but they're equipped with the tools necessary to dig to the temple. Their unofficial leader is Tauriano, a mild-mannered professor of archaeology at a far-off university. The archaeologists are unsure how to proceed with their mission; Mekkalath is only the most obvious of many dangers. They might hire the characters as scouts or guards. While they won't fight on the characters' behalf, they might loan the use of their gorgons or help characters who've earned their trust by tricking or distracting Mekkalath, perhaps by creating a trap into which the dragon could be lured.

Wizard's Tower

At the north end of the village stands a square tower once inhabited by the wizard Vandomar. He's long dead, and the tower's floors have collapsed; all that remains is a fifty-foot stone shell with a precarious staircase winding up its interior wall.

The tower recently became the base of a githyanki delegation: three **githyanki warriors** and their leader, Azima, a **githyanki knight** (alternatively, Azima might be a **githyanki gish** from *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*). One githyanki is always on guard, with another armed, armored, and awake nearby. One githyanki is usually asleep, and one is usually out hunting for food, exploring the hill, or—in Azima's case—negotiating with Mekkalath.

The group came to Gardmore Abbey to forge an alliance with Mekkalath, whose power would tip the balance in a war on the Astral Plane. Mekkalath prefers sitting on his hoard and terrorizing the countryside, but he respects the ancient ties between red dragons and githyanki and has given the group permission to visit him and continue negotiating.

Azima and her warriors are indifferent to the characters at first, but she is desperate to earn Mekkalath's goodwill. If the characters attract the dragon's ire or display wealth and magic items that might impress him, Azima might ambush them. If the characters slay Mekkalath, Azima and her followers return to the Astral Plane after swearing vengeance on the characters.

Feygrove

The southeastern side of the hill once held flourishing gardens: an idyllic refuge in an otherwise martial environment. When the abbey was destroyed, three dryads settled in the abandoned gardens. Their presence concentrated magical energy from the Feywild that transformed the gardens into a mystical faerie grove. But a generation ago, a coven of three **green hags** snuck into the grove, slew the dryads, and took their place, using their Illusory Appearance ability to impersonate the dryads when necessary. The hags keep a pack of six **displacer beasts** as hunting animals and pets (alternatively, you can use **yeth hounds** from *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*).

The hags use the Feygrove as their base while pursuing bloodthirsty schemes against enemies both real and imagined. They avoid Mekkalath when possible, but when forced to interact with the dragon, they placate him with obsequious flattery and treasure plucked from their victims' corpses. The hags lair in the Whispering Wood, a circular copse of trees around a natural spring, where the Feywild's magic is strongest.

In addition to the Whispering Wood, the Feygrove holds an ancient holy well called the Font of Ioun, once sacred to the knights who dwelled here. Those who drank directly from the font received visions of the past and future from this god of knowledge. Good characters who drink from the font might receive a vision; roll on the Visions of Ioun table below.

Visions of Ioun

1d6	Vision
1	Minotaurs dig beneath the hill and build a temple to Bahamut and other gods.
2	Minotaurs clad in the garb of a bestial cult summon demons and slay other minotaur priests in a horrific bloodbath.
3	Monks and knights travel to the hill and construct the abbey at its summit.
4	Knights defeat a hobgoblin warlord and bring back a *Deck of Many Things* and other trophies.
5	As an army besieges the abbey, a knight draws the Skull card from a *Deck of Many Things*. Skull-headed Undead appear and massacre everyone they see.
6	A huge red dragon emerges from the catacombs beneath the abbey to make his lair atop the hill. Among his treasures is a *Deck of Many Things*.

Beyond the hags, the Feygrove is home to many other dangers. The overgrown trees are the den of countless **giant spiders** and several **phase spiders**. Among these are deadly **ruin spiders** (see chapter 21 for this stat block), creatures altered by the magic of a *Deck of Many Things*.

A bell tower once stood high on the slope above the Feygrove, but the tower has collapsed. For centuries the massive iron bell has lain in the ruins, covered with grass and barely discernible. Recently, a young **displacer beast** (or **displacer beast kitten** from *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*) exploring the bell accidentally tipped it over and got caught inside. The creature is now trapped and howling miserably, its cries echoing and amplified by the bell into an otherworldly groan. Other displacer beasts in the grove take delight in the creature's misfortune, while the howling has attracted the notice of hungry spiders. Characters willing to free the creature might befriend it or return it to the hags for a favor.

Watchtower

On the southern end of the hill stands a tall spire with a commanding view of the surrounding terrain. When Captain Nenlast drew from the *Deck of Many Things*, a wave of energy from the Far Realm uprooted the spire from regular space and time and transformed everyone inside into deadly Aberrations. But wards placed by the knights long before kept the Far Realm's magic confined within the tower, which became a pocket dimension with no escape. The Aberrations were trapped in the tower, unable to leave until the Far Realm energies dispersed and the tower stabilized in the present.

More than a century ago, adventurers investigating the abbey found a way inside the watchtower. They slew the Aberrations' beholder leader and dispelled the Far Realm magic that isolated the spire. Time once again began to affect the watchtower, though nothing remained alive within its walls.

Recently, a fell comet streaked through the sky above the abbey. As it did, lingering traces of the Far Realm energy woke again. The dead beholder was reanimated as a diabolical Undead known as a death tyrant. This creature, and other Far Realm Aberrations that fell from the comet, still hunt within the tower. But the knights' protective magic hasn't failed entirely; the creatures within the watchtower are trapped inside until someone or something frees them.

The watchtower is in better physical shape than the rest of the abbey. It was protected from time's ravages during the centuries it was trapped in a pocket dimension. The spire still has wooden floors and a ceiling. The circular stairs within are weakened and precarious but mostly intact. The chambers within the tower are home to four **red slaadi**

A GITHYANKI EMBASSY MAKES CAMP IN THE WIZARD'S TOWER.

ALI KANDRE HONORE

(an equal number of **star spawn manglers** from *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse* might replace or supplement the slaadi). The top of the watchtower, however, is the domain of the **death tyrant**.

None of the Aberrations within the watchtower can leave it, thanks to the ancient knights' protective spells, but characters might agree to remove these wards as part of a deal with the death tyrant. A character who is aware of the wards and able to perceive them (for example, via the *Detect Magic* spell) can permanently remove them with the *Dispel Magic* spell (DC 16). Alternatively, anyone can attempt to remove the wards by performing a 1-hour ritual outside the watchtower and succeeding on a DC 21 Intelligence (Arcana) check. Removing these protective spells allows the Aberrations inside the tower to leave, something they're all eager to do. Physical damage to the watchtower—volcanic activity, for example, spreading from Mekkalath's lair—could also break the wards and release the creatures trapped within.

The death tyrant is desperate to escape the watchtower and promises anything to characters who reach the tower's summit. The tyrant keeps the strict letter of any promise it makes, but as it cares nothing for living creatures and respects only power, characters who try to direct it against Mekkalath might regret their decision. For example, the death tyrant might agree to attack the dragon, then start by slaying the peaceful minotaurs and turning them into its zombie minions. Mekkalath is aware of the death tyrant, and if it escapes, Mekkalath soon moves to destroy this potential rival and secure his dominance over the hill. Such a battle might last long enough for daring characters to infiltrate Dragon's Roost and abscond with treasures from Mekkalath's hoard.

A death tyrant versus a red dragon? Now that's a fight I'd like to see!

(I'm joking. Please don't actually start this fight. You might perish.)

Dragon's Roost

The summit of the hill was once crowded with buildings. All but a few were destroyed in the siege of the abbey centuries ago, and the remainder were badly damaged. Mekkalath's arrival caused additional destruction: the red dragon's magic triggered volcanic activity that left the area riddled with flaming pits, rocky outcroppings, and rivers of lava. His magic also opened portals to the Elemental Plane of Fire, bringing salamanders and fire elementals to the hilltop. The dragon's domain, shown in map 16.2, is the most dangerous part of the ruins by far.

A hidden stair—steep, long abandoned, and choked with rubble and undergrowth—leads up the western side of the hill. This secret staircase can be found with 1 hour of searching and a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check. Flying creatures can spot the staircase more easily, gaining advantage on the check. Climbing the steps requires no checks, but it takes 1 hour to clear a path and scramble over the largest chunks of rubble. Climbers risk encountering hostile creatures as they traverse the staircase, and if Mekkalath takes to the air, he's likely to spot them.

The stairs ascend to the Hall of Glory, formerly a lavish trophy room and memorial to fallen knights. The roof has fallen in, and the walls are mostly rubble; it is home to a troop of eight **salamanders** brought from the Elemental Plane of Fire by Mekkalath's magic. The salamanders serve Mekkalath, patrolling the hill and performing errands for him. A stairway in the back of the hall descends to the vaults but is filled with lava.

A ruined barrack lies on the south side of the area. Like most of the other buildings, the roof is gone and the walls are mostly rubble. The strongest **fire elemental** (or a **fire elemental myrmidon** from *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*) dwells here, along with a few more **fire elementals** as minions. Rubble blocks another stairway descending to the vaults.

At the north end of the summit stands a gatehouse. The gatehouse's stone roof and walls are intact, though the massive double door has collapsed. The gatehouse is home to two **devas**, angels in service to Bahamut who've guarded the abbey since its founding. They couldn't stop the siege or the Undead lured by the *Deck of Many Things*, but they remained in the ruins until Mekkalath rose from the vaults below and drove them out. The angels refuse to abandon their posts and are content to wait as long as it takes for Mekkalath to depart.

The remains of the abbey's temple—surrounded by fires, smoke, and slow-moving lava streams—serve as Mekkalath's lair. This **adult red dragon** is an awesome sight, resting on a massive pile

of coins, jewels, and precious objects. From this vantage, Mekkalath can see almost anywhere on the hilltop; only the gatehouse, with its stone roof, blocks his vision. **Salamanders** from the Hall of Glory visit frequently to serve Mekkalath's every desire. When he is hungry, the dragon hunts a vast region around the hill. He has yet to encounter anyone able to stop him. A staircase in the ruined temple descends to the catacombs but is choked with rubble.

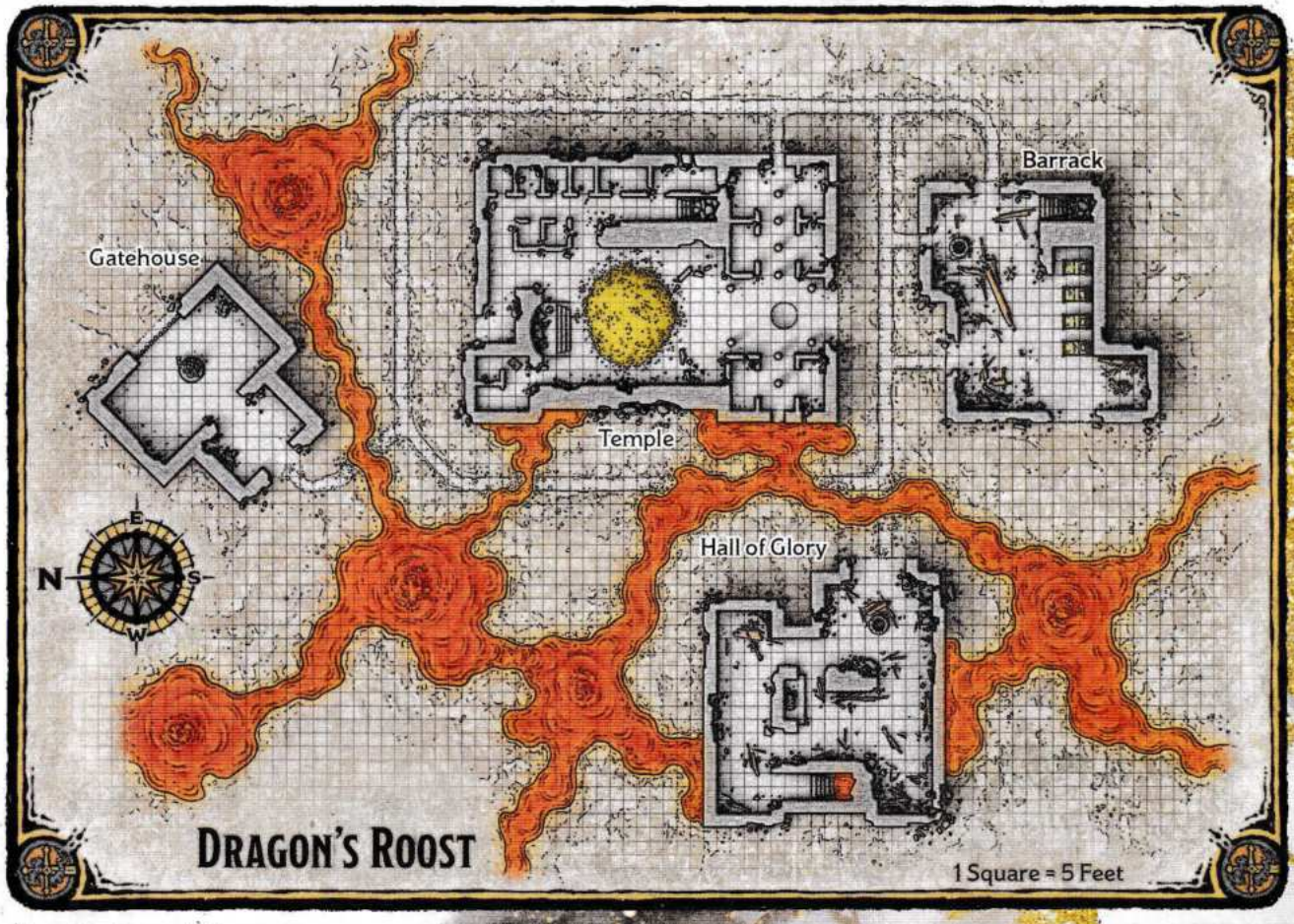
Among Mekkalath's hoard is a *Deck of Many Things*. If the characters reach the hoard by defeating the dragon in battle or through stealth—perhaps while the dragon is distracted by food, the githyanki embassy, or an escaped death tyrant—the treasure should also include one rare or very rare magic item for each character, chosen to suit their needs and desires.

Catacombs and Vaults

Two underground levels within the hill are currently inaccessible, but characters or the minotaur archaeologists might eventually reopen them.

The uppermost level is a winding network of catacombs the knights used to bury their honored dead. The entrance is through a stairway descending from the temple (now Mekkalath's lair), but the stairs are choked with rubble. The catacombs include shrines to various gods, memorials to the knights' many exploits, and secret tombs for knights who betrayed the order and were hidden in shame. While Undead are the most likely type of creature found in the catacombs, a variety of Underdark creatures could have dug their way into these tunnels, such as **drow**, **troglodytes**, or an **umber hulk**.

Beneath the catacombs lie the vaults that hold the abandoned minotaur settlement, centered around a temple to Bahamut and other good gods that was corrupted to the worship of Baphomet. Stairways descend to this level from the old barrack and hall atop the hill, and a winding tunnel leads west from the vaults to the base of the hill. While the stairs are choked with lava and rubble, this tunnel would still be navigable if its entrance on the hill's slope were uncovered, a project that would take several individuals a day to complete. Worship of Baphomet has lured demons to these halls, but shrines to good deities might be protected by angels or Constructs such as **iron golems**, **stone golems**, a **shield guardian**, or **helmed horrors**. Additionally any of the subterranean creatures in the catacombs might have advanced farther into the vaults. If Baphomet cultists return to the vaults, they would soon summon further horrifying evils.



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Map 16.2: Dragon's Roost

CHAPTER 17

DONJON

THIS CHAPTER, INTENDED FOR DMs, DETAILS a dungeon called the Donjon Sphere. You can use this dungeon to describe the fate of a character who draws the Donjon card from a *Deck of Many Things*. This chapter also includes suggestions for other ways adventurers might end up in the Donjon Sphere, as well as advice for how to continue a campaign or keep it on track if the party gets split up.

The Donjon Sphere

The Donjon Sphere is a metal sphere that drifts through the Astral Sea. Centuries ago, an unknown species of intelligent beings built the sphere to capture and contain specimens from across the cosmos. They used strange magic to peer into the minds of their captives and observe them in simulated environments, curious to understand the minds of these alien creatures. When the first *Deck of Many Things* was created, the Donjon card was linked to the sphere, sending prisoners there.

The collective distress of the sphere's prisoners ultimately attracted the attention of a group of feyrs: Astral Sea monsters that feed on creatures' nightmares. The feyrs infiltrated the Donjon Sphere and wrought havoc, forcing the sphere's stewards to abandon it. After devouring the nightmares of everyone left inside the sphere, the feyrs moved on.

Since then, the Donjon Sphere has drifted through the Astral Sea. Automated systems keep the vessel working and on course, and Constructs called detention drones bring in a steady supply of fresh specimens. However, swaths of the sphere have fallen into disrepair or outright mayhem. For new arrivals, many brought by a *Deck of Many Things*, the anarchy means it's never been easier to wriggle free of the dungeon's crumbling wards and traps. However, this same chaos still makes banishment to the sphere extremely perilous.

Finding the Sphere

The Donjon Sphere is too small to be observed from any planet's surface without a telescope or magical aid, but clues to the sphere's whereabouts can still be found among the stars.

A character with a *Deck of Many Things* can deduce the Donjon Sphere's location by spending 8 hours studying the night sky and using the cards as a divination tool. Afterward, the character must succeed on a DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) check to determine the sphere's coordinates in the Astral Sea. On a failed check, the character fails to calculate the sphere's location but can try again the next day, reducing the DC of the check by 1 for each consecutive attempt. Other methods of finding the sphere are detailed in the "Adventure Hooks" section below.

Once the sphere is located in the Astral Sea, the characters must reach it, probably using teleportation magic or a spelljamming vessel.

Adventure Hooks

Certain powerful organizations know the Donjon Sphere's location:

Asteria's Aid. The famous paladin Asteria, detailed in chapter 22, keeps track of each *Deck of Many Things* and those who've suffered from their many hazards. She approaches the party after a character draws the Donjon card and disappears. Asteria knows the pain of losing a friend to unjust imprisonment and offers to help. She draws a replica of the teleportation circle inside the sphere. If the party can find someone able to cast the *Teleport* spell, they can safely teleport into the sphere.

Observatory Assistance. Scholars at a nearby observatory—such as the one described in chapter 13—spot an unidentified celestial object drifting across the night sky with their telescope. The observatory calls for brave adventurers to use its teleportation device to investigate.

Solar Bastion Rescue. Hilarion, the angelic leader of the Solar Bastion (see chapter 10), recently sent a trio of knights to investigate the Donjon Sphere, but the knights failed to return. After learning that one of the characters recently drew the Donjon card from a *Deck of Many Things*, Hilarion offers to transport the party to the sphere to save their friend—and, hopefully, the missing knights.

Layers

The Donjon Sphere's hollow interior is divided into several nested layers, as shown in map 17.1. A complex web of metal tunnels and gears, navigable only by the sphere's specially programmed detention drones, separates the layers.

Outer Surface

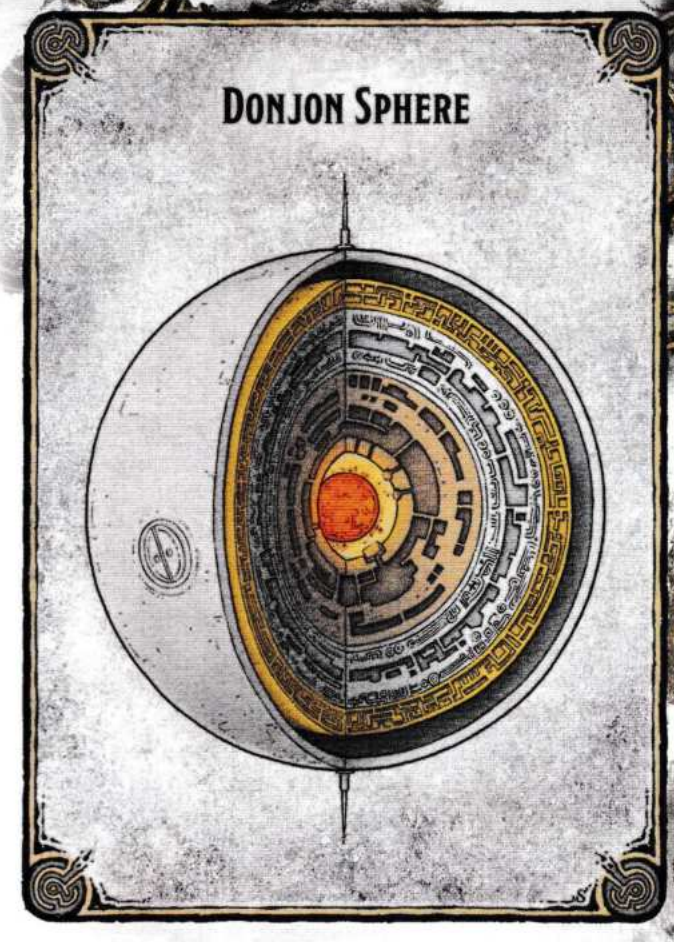
The outer surface of the sphere is perfectly smooth, made from hundreds of panels of rare space metals. When debris or attackers mar the surface, repair drones replace the damaged panels within hours. A 50-foot-wide circular hatch just off the sphere's equator is the only surface entrance. This hatch opens and closes automatically for detention drones leaving and entering the sphere.

The ends of a sharp spindle protrude from each of the sphere's poles like antennae. Each spindle siphons excess energy from the sphere's power core, creating an energy shield that obscures the structure from most divination magic and traditional means of observation.

Gilded Labyrinth

A three-dimensional maze of brassy metal separates the sphere's surface from its inner levels. This so-called Gilded Labyrinth delays escape. Few escapees last long in the maze before they're recaptured by the sphere's detention drones, which know every inch of the complex.

In addition, like the wrinkles of a brain, the Gilded Labyrinth's countless reflective surfaces and edges amplify the invisible energy radiated from the sphere's power core. This effect can't be perceived by most creatures, but the energy collected is vital to the sphere's continued operation.



Map 17.1: Donjon Sphere

Donjon Core

The penultimate layer of the Donjon Sphere is described in detail on the following pages.

Power Core

The center of the Donjon Sphere is a massive molten ball created by the planar portal in area 33 of the Donjon Core. This ball of fire generates power used throughout the sphere.

Running the Sphere

As a DM, your first challenge is getting all the characters to the Donjon Sphere; your next challenge is getting them out.

Splitting the Party

One way to get sent to the Donjon Sphere is to draw the Donjon card from a *Deck of Many Things*. When this happens, only the character who drew the card is banished to the sphere. But splitting the party can be challenging for your table, since it's difficult to keep all players engaged when one or more

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characters aren't present for a scene. How can the DM make this work?

Here are some ideas for keeping the entire table engaged if the party splits up, whether you're using the sphere or some other adventure location:

One-Session Side Adventure. Perhaps the campaign's main adventuring party is reunited through the efforts of an entirely different set of heroes. Have your players all use new characters for a one-session adventure in which they rescue the separated character or otherwise overcome the obstacle that has divided the main party.

Simulacrum for a Session. When strange magic is at play, a figment of the separated character might appear. Maybe a clone from an alternate dimension offers to help the party rescue the missing character. Perhaps the Donjon Sphere's simulation chambers (area 25) can be used to project a simulacrum of the imprisoned character.

Temporary Character. Ask the player of a separated character to play a new character who joins the main party for one or two sessions. Does the imprisoned party member have friends or family who'd help rescue their kin? Perhaps the new character has special knowledge of the adventure location or a personal quest to accomplish there.

More advice on this topic, and how to accommodate a player who suddenly can't play their usual character, can be found in chapter 18.

Escaping the Sphere

The "Donjon Core Locations" section later in this chapter includes a variety of areas where prisoners could be found; in particular, a trapped character is likely to be found in one of the stasis pods (area 5) or, if they resisted the detention drones, one of the isolation chambers (area 20). Alternatively, the character might have escaped already and be found wandering in the sphere.

If it would better fit your group, a trapped character can mysteriously reappear after a few in-game hours or days, rejoining the party on their own. Those who return from the sphere in this way never remember how they escaped—nor do they return wholly unchanged. Use the following curse, the Mark of the Donjon, to represent the transformation of a character who escapes the Donjon Sphere under mysterious circumstances.

Mark of the Donjon

A character who inexplicably reappears after spending time in the Donjon Sphere gains a lingering curse called a Mark of the Donjon. Determine the character's mark by rolling on the Marks of the Donjon table. A Mark of the Donjon lasts until removed by a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic.

Marks of the Donjon

d6	Curse
1	The character can't stop shivering.
2	The character's vision is limited to a 5-foot-wide line pointing in a single direction.
3	The character gets nauseous near windows or doorways. If the character moves through such a threshold, the character has disadvantage on saving throws for 1 minute.
4	The character is plagued by nightmares of metal constructs.
5	The character is disoriented by wide-open spaces and has no sense of direction outdoors.
6	While in sunlight, the character has disadvantage on attack rolls.

Donjon Sphere Features

The Donjon Sphere has the following features.

Ceilings, Lighting, and Walls

Ceilings in the Donjon Sphere are 10 feet high. Magic panels in the ceiling radiate dim light.

The walls, which contain most of the sphere's machinery, are covered in panels of smooth, invulnerable metal sheeting.

Detention Drones

As the Donjon Sphere drifts about the Astral Sea, its systems send mechanical scouts called detention drones to nearby worlds to acquire new captives. Detention drones are Constructs that follow their ancient programming mindlessly and unerringly.

A detention drone is hostile to creatures without key cards (see the "Doors and Key Cards" section) but indifferent to a creature with a key card and anyone accompanying them, unless attacked. Detention drones don't carry key cards and can't open locked doors, but they can travel through maintenance shafts (see the "Maintenance Shaft" section). After 2d4 days of service, a detention drone must spend 24 hours resting in a rewinding station (such as those in area 7) before it can resume service.

Detention drones vary in size, strength, and shape, though most are shaped like some kind of mechanical animal or plant. You can use the game statistics for any Construct to represent a detention drone; see "Drone Patrols" below for suggestions. All detention drones have a flying speed of 30 feet, the ability to hover, and the following action option:

Detention Orb. The drone launches a tiny orb of magical force at a creature it can see within 30 feet of itself. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be encased in the orb, which expands to a size just large enough to contain the creature. While encased, the creature doesn't need to breathe, eat, or drink, and it doesn't age. Nothing can pass

through the orb, nor can any creature teleport or use planar travel to enter or exit the orb. As a bonus action, the drone can move the orb and its contents up to 30 feet in any direction. A successful casting of the *Dispel Magic* spell on the orb (DC 15) destroys it. The orb otherwise remains intact until the drone spends an action to end the effect or the drone is destroyed. A drone can have only one detention orb active at a time; if the drone creates a detention orb when it already has one active, the first orb disappears, freeing the creature inside.

Drone Patrols

Small groups of detention drones patrol the Donjon Sphere looking for escapees or intruders. When the text indicates that a drone patrol can be encountered in a location, roll on the Drone Patrols table to determine the number and types of the drones in the patrol, or choose an encounter you like.

Drone Patrols

d6	Patrol Composition
1–2	1d6 **quadrones**
3	1d4 suits of **animated armor**
4–5	2 **helmed horrors**
6	1 **shield guardian**

Doors and Key Cards

Doors in the Donjon Sphere are made of the same space metals as the outer surface. A magical sensor above each doorway detects movement within 10 feet, which causes the door to open until no more movement is detected.

Some doors are color coded and require a key card to open. A creature carrying the appropriate key card can open a locked door by standing within 10 feet of the door and uttering the command word "open" in Infernal. Doors that require key cards to unlock are color coded on map 17.2 and called out in the text. The color of the door indicates the type of key card necessary to unlock it. Key cards come in three colors:

Red Key Cards. The sphere's workhands carried red key cards, which open red doors.

Blue Key Cards. High-ranking stewards and technicians carried blue key cards to access delicate machinery or important research data. A blue key card unlocks blue and red doors.

Yellow Key Cards. Only the chief engineers carried yellow key cards, which grant access to the observatory, damselfly bay, and inner core. A yellow key card unlocks yellow, blue, and red doors.

Casting a *Knock* spell on a red door's lock suppresses the lock for 10 minutes, casting a *Knock* spell on a blue door's lock suppresses the lock for 1 minute, and casting a *Knock* spell on a yellow door's lock suppresses the lock until the start of the caster's next turn.

Detention Drone

Secret Doors

A number of secret doors are hidden in the Donjon Core. A character who searches a wall where a secret door is located and succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check finds minuscule bumps along the wall's surface. Pressing these bumps causes the door to slide open.

Language

The Donjon Sphere's creators spoke and wrote Infernal. All instructions, labels, and other visible text in the sphere are in this language. The doors respond only to Infernal. Creatures native to the sphere presume anyone communicating with them in a language other than Infernal is a trespasser, though drones overlook the offense if the offender has a key card or is accompanied by a creature that does.

Magic in the Sphere

No spell other than *Wish* can be used to leave the Donjon Sphere or transport a character from one part of it to another. Effects that banish creatures to other planes of existence don't work inside the sphere. A creature that attempts to cast a spell or use a magic item or artifact to teleport from the sphere hears a dull fizzing in its head as the effect fails. The exception to this rule is magic that allows transit to the Border Ethereal, such as the

KAI CARPENTER

Etherealness spell. A creature that enters the Border Ethereal from the Donjon Sphere is returned to the sphere upon leaving that plane.

Magic that summons creatures or objects from other planes, or that allows contact with beings from other planes, functions normally inside the Donjon Sphere, as does magic that involves an extradimensional space. Any spells cast within such an extradimensional space are subject to the same restrictions as magic cast in the Donjon Sphere. While characters are in the sphere, those who receive spells from deities or otherworldly patrons continue to do so.

Maintenance Shafts

Rectangular shafts, labeled area 9 on map 17.2, allow detention drones to move throughout the sphere. Each shaft is protected by an iron grate, which has AC 19, 15 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A detention drone within 10 feet of a grate can use an action to transmit a signal that shifts the grate aside. A drone that enters an open shaft can travel to any other shaft entrance in the Donjon core in 1d4 minutes.

Any creature other than a detention drone that attempts to travel from one shaft entrance to another must make a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a failed check, the creature gets lost in the shafts for 2d4 hours before reemerging at a random shaft entrance in the Donjon core.

Donjon Core Locations

Prisoners are kept in the Donjon core. The following locations are keyed to map 17.2. The area described in this map is spherical; hallways leading off one edge of the map connect to other hallways on the opposite side.

1: Intake Circle

At the center of this octagonal chamber's floor is a permanent teleportation circle etched in stone. Many newcomers to the sphere arrive via this circle, including creatures that draw the Donjon card from a *Deck of Many Things*. The teleportation circle can be used only to enter the sphere, not to leave it.

The door to the south has been punctured with a jagged hole big enough for Medium characters to squeeze through. Metallic rubble blocks the tunnel that leads north.

One round after the circle is activated, a drone patrol arrives from area 7 to escort any new arrivals to the stasis pods in area 5. Huge prisoners are taken to massive stasis pods in area 18 instead. Prisoners who put up an especially strong resistance might be taken directly to an isolation chamber in area 20.

2: Pool

A young **aboleth** named Th'kogga is contained in the 80-foot-deep pool of water here. Aware of the room's controls but unsure how they operate, Th'kogga attempts to charm any creature that comes within 30 feet of the pool, then urges that thrall to help it escape.

An invisible seal, like that created by the *Wall of Force* spell, covers the pool. A detention drone or a creature with a blue or yellow key card can use an action to flip the lever on the south wall to disable or reenable the seal. Buttons around the lever control the pool's salinity, temperature, and automatic cleaning systems. If these controls are tampered with, Th'kogga's pool becomes unlivable; if forced to remain there, the aboleth dies in 2d4 days.

3: Engineer's Quarters

The sphere's chief engineer used this chamber as an office, a workshop, and living quarters.

The metal drawers along the south wall contain books inscribed with complex diagrams and technical instructions written in Infernal. One thick tome, titled *Elevator Manual*, contains the glyph sequence to bypass the lock on the elevator in area 19. Another manual, titled *Control Gems*, describes how the sphere's creators employed the slaad control gems in area 32 to contain the power of the elemental portal in area 33.

Treasure. Scattered among the equipment are a blue key card, a set of tinker's tools, and five star rose quartzes worth 50 gp each.

4: Stasis Controls

On the north wall of this room are three levers in the upright position. Each lever controls the power to three blocks of stasis pods in area 5, which the windows along the south wall of this room overlook.

5: Stasis Pods

The doors to this chamber are red.

Nine massive metal containers fill this sterile chamber. Each contains ten coffin-like, crystalline stasis pods, which slide in or out of their container. Each stasis pod contains an unconscious Humanoid prisoner in a state of magical suspended animation. Most of these prisoners are **commoners**, but if you want to introduce a particular NPC to help the party or serve as an antagonist, that individual could be trapped in one of these pods. A character who drew the Donjon card from a *Deck of Many Things* could also be trapped here.

A stasis pod can be unlatched only from the outside. Each stasis pod is big enough to hold a Large creature and has AC 11, 15 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. If a living creature is

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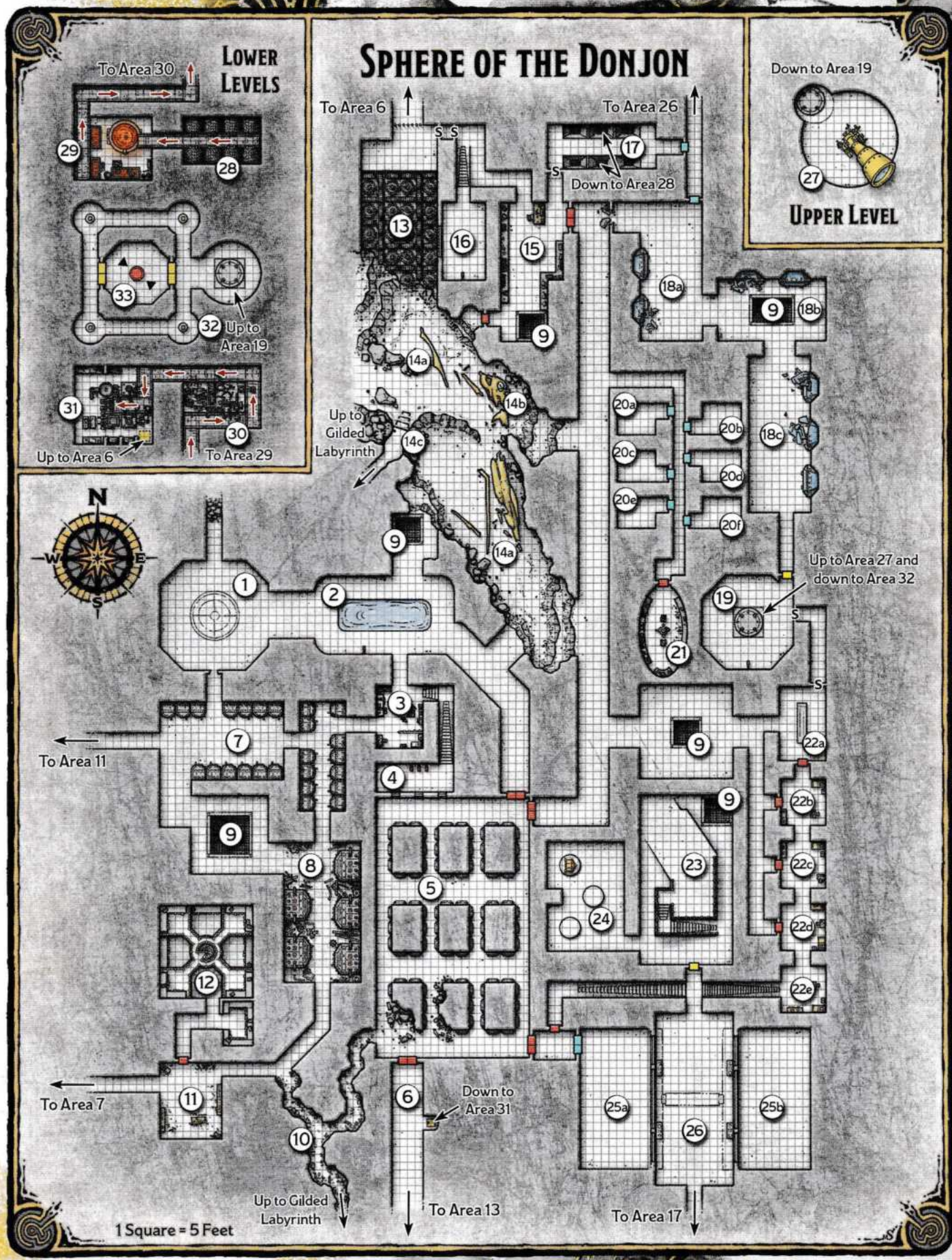


Map 17.2: Donjon Core

placed in a powered, closed stasis pod for 1 minute, the creature has the unconscious condition and is in stasis. While in stasis, the creature doesn't require air, food, or drink, and it doesn't age. If the creature is removed from the stasis pod or the stasis pod's power is shut off, the creature regains consciousness after 1 minute or once it takes damage.

The pods in the southwest corner were ruined when an umber hulk burst from its malfunctioning stasis pod. It smashed the pods around it in a rage, then burrowed through the wall, creating area 10.

6: Maintenance Hall

The door at this hall's north end is red.

A locked yellow hatch in the floor in an alcove off this hallway covers a ladder that connects to area 31 below. The hatch is a yellow door.

7: Drone Containment

This chamber houses inactive detention drones. Repair bays called rewinding stations line the walls. Each rewinding station, which can hold one detention drone at a time, is a Large object with AC 11, 40 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Once per day, a drone patrol whose service time is almost expired comes here for rewinding. If engaged in combat, these drones have the unconscious condition after 1d4 + 1 rounds.

8: Prototype Lab

Metal plates, chains, cogs, and pipes are strewn about the oversized bays in this chamber. Each bay contains a prototype detention drone in a different state of assembly.

Only one prototype drone is functional, though it is inactive. A character with tinker's tools can spend 10 minutes repairing the drone and make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a successful check, the drone's gears start winding, and it jerks to life. The drone, which calls itself Prototype WX-401 and resembles a human-size pitcher plant (use the **tridrone** stat block), is friendly toward the character who repaired it and follows that character's instructions to the best of its ability. It lacks the Detention Orb action of other detention drones.

9: Maintenance Shaft

These access tunnels are used by detention drones to move throughout the sphere. See "Donjon Sphere Features" for more information.

10: Umber Hulk Tunnel

An umber hulk created this tunnel after freeing itself from a malfunctioning stasis pod in area 5. Protruding bits of metal and low ceilings make the tunnel difficult terrain. To the south, the tunnel slopes upward to the Gilded Labyrinth.

11: Archive Antechamber

The fine chairs, desks, and shelves that once furnished this spacious antechamber have all been torn to shreds. A character who searches for tracks and succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check finds large scrapes along the walls from the umber hulk that escaped area 5. The door in this chamber's north wall is red.

12: Archive

Shelves full of massive logbooks line the walls of this two-story archive. A spiral staircase in the room's center connects to the archive's upper level. The books contain records on all prisoners inducted into the facility before the sphere's stewards fled.

The archive is occupied by Ganakki, a **green slaad** that appears as a pallid halfling scholar. Ganakki yearns to transform into a gray slaad and believes it can find the key to its metamorphosis somewhere in the Donjon Sphere. The party can learn much about the sphere from the slaad—including, possibly, a means of escape. However, Ganakki won't leave the archive. Ganakki has a red key card.

13: Ruined Trap Room

A closed portcullis divides this area from area 6. The lever in area 16 can raise the iron bars.

This hall was once a trap room featuring a balance beam that spanned a pit of grinding gears (see the Balance and Ruin trap room in chapter 4). When a spelljamming ship from area 23 crashed into the eastern side of the hall, the trap was destroyed. The nonfunctional gears are difficult terrain.

A secret door is concealed in the northeast corner of this room.

14: Crash Site

Rubble and metal wreckage cover the ground of this ragged fissure. The ceiling is 20 feet high, and its magical light panels have been destroyed, leaving this area in darkness.

When escaped prisoners tried to fly the damselfly ship in area 23 to safety, they crashed it midway through the launch bay, causing a chain of explosions that destroyed this area. A thick wall of debris, not shown on the map, blocks off the western half of the crash site.

14a: Damselfly Wreckage

Pieces of a destroyed spelljamming ship lie scattered about the crash site. About 50 pounds of useful salvage (worth 500 gp) can be collected here.

14B: Survivor Camp

Two **Solar Bastion knights** (see chapter 10) set up camp here after losing a companion to a large drone patrol. These knights came to explore the Donjon Sphere and its connection to the *Deck of Many Things*. The knights are as follows:

Knight Emerist Verigo. Emerist is the leader of this mission and is a lawful neutral human. Emerist blames herself for the failure of the mission, and the death of the third member of her party, Baerj, weighs heavily on Emerist's conscience.

Knight Hielyo Anguld. Hielyo is a new member of the Solar Bastion, and this is their first official mission on the order's behalf. They are a lawful good dragonborn of blue dragon ancestry. Despite the quest's many hardships, Hielyo remains brave and optimistic. Hielyo wants to destroy the sphere, which has caused so much grief for so many.

The knights are initially indifferent to the characters. If made friendly, they are willing to work with the party to escape the sphere. Emerist and Hielyo can tell the party about the secret doors between areas 19 and 22a, though the knights don't know how to operate the elevator in area 19. They also offer the party a *Spell Scroll* of *Comprehend Languages* and a *Chime of Opening* with 4 charges remaining. The *Chime of Opening* can be used to open key card–locked doors like the *Knock* spell, as described in the "Doors and Key Cards" section; when used this way, one use of the chime is equivalent to one casting of the *Knock* spell.

14C: Labyrinth Entrance

This rough tunnel connects to the Gilded Labyrinth above.

15: Metallurgy Lab

The doors leading into the northeast and southwest ends of this chamber are both red.

Alien minerals and samples of rare ores line the shelves of this metallurgist's laboratory. An advanced detention drone (use the **shield guardian** stat block) stands in the room's corner. This Construct doesn't have a control amulet and can't be controlled like other shield guardians; it attacks any creature that enters the room without displaying a key card. It has the *Confusion* spell stored.

A secret door in an alcove in this room's northeast corner leads to area 17.

Treasure. A set of smith's tools can be assembled from the lab equipment. On the shelves is a total of 30 pounds of rare space metals (worth 300 gp) and a fully charged *Cube of Force*.

16: Observation Room

This room is reached by ascending stairs. The window in this chamber overlooks the trap room below. A lever on the south wall controls the portcullis north of area 13.

17: Trash Disposal

The eastern door to this chamber is blue.

Wide chutes along the edges of this room's floor connect to the crusher (area 28), allowing for easy disposal of waste materials.

A **flumph** named Bimbi hovers uncertainly, steeling itself to go down a chute to the crusher. It clutches a blue key card in its tentacles. Upon seeing the characters, Bimbi sighs with relief and explains it's searching for fresh brains to feed its friend, a mind flayer imprisoned in an isolation chamber (area 20b). "I used to find brains in the brain room," Bimbi burbles. "But I knocked over some jars there, and the brains came to life!" If the characters agree to clear the "brain monsters" out of area 21, the flumph gives them its key card.

18: Massive Stasis Pods

These large halls provide access to stasis pods built into the walls, each one larger and stronger than the ones in area 5. Each can hold a Huge creature and has AC 12, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Closed pods can be opened with a blue or yellow key card.

18A: Western Pods

This room's western door has been destroyed. The corpse of an unarmed frost giant lies in a heap next to a smashed stasis pod. A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check finds deep claw marks in the walls leading to area 18b, just like those in area 11.

A blue door is in the northeast corner.

18B: Central Pods

A half-eaten chuul corpse lies near a broken stasis pod in this room. Claw marks mar the walls toward area 18c.

18C: Southern Pods

Two monstrous corpses lie on the floor of this room: an especially large owlbear and the umber hulk that broke the pods and killed the frost giant, chuul, and owlbear in the other rooms. After breaking a second pod in this room, the umber hulk met its match. The umber hulk's slayer, a **remorhaz** with 113 hit points remaining, stands in the center of this room, gathering its wits after its long stasis. When it sees the party, it attacks viciously, assuming the characters to be its imprisoners. The remorhaz relentlessly chases its opponents throughout the sphere.

Some of the creatures imprisoned in the Donjon Sphere aren't content to remain there.

19: Elevator Room

The northern door to this chamber is yellow.

The round platform in the center of this room is a mechanical elevator, which connects to area 27 above and area 32 below. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check spots a panel on the east wall that, when pushed, reveals a secret door.

A lever on the wall controls the elevator's operation. On the wall to the lever's right is a card slot. On the lever's opposite side protrudes a circular mechanism with three interlocking dials, each with a set of alien glyphs around the circumference. The lever won't budge unless a yellow key card is inserted into the card slot or the three dials are set to the correct sequence of glyphs. The sequence can be found in the tome *Elevator Manual* in area 3.

Once the elevator is activated, it takes 2 rounds for the elevator doors to close and 1 minute to reach area 27 or 32. After 5 minutes in either area, the elevator returns to this room.

A secret door is hidden in the eastern wall.

20: Isolation Chambers

Each of these metal chambers has a blue door. A slot for food delivery near the base of each door can be opened from the hall without a key card.

20A: Dead Naga

The desiccated remains of a spirit naga lie in this chamber. If the remains are disturbed, they rise as a **bone naga** and attack.

20B: Q'zar'ktan

The **mind flayer** in this room, named Q'zar'ktan, recently established a symbiotic relationship with Bimbi, the flumph in area 17. Bimbi brings Q'zar'ktan preserved brains to eat. In exchange, Q'zar'ktan allows the flumph to harmlessly siphon some of the mind flayer's mental energy. Q'zar'ktan, morose and resigned to its fate in this dungeon, is initially indifferent to characters. It tells them about its predicament and mentions that the flumph hasn't stopped by in a while.

20C–E: Empty Chambers

These chambers are empty.

20F: Myconids

A **myconid adult** named Cluzong and two **myconid sprouts** have sprung up from the corpse of a svirfneblin prisoner in the corner of this damp cell. Having known nothing else, the myconids regard this cell as their home and have no desire to leave. They are indifferent to visitors.

MICHELE GIORGI

DRONES CEASELESSLY PATROL THE GILDED LABYRINTH.

KAI CARPENTER

21: Brain Chamber

The door to this chamber is red.

A strange, silver machine rests between a pair of metal chairs in the center of this room. Shelves lining the walls hold potion bottles and glass jars, many of which contain brains suspended in colorful liquid. Glassware on one shelf has been knocked over, covering the floor in broken glass.

Bimbi the flumph (area 17) accidentally spilled many of the jars here; the resulting alchemical stew mutated three of the brains in this room. The now-floating brains (use the **grell** stat block) attack any creatures that enter the area.

Two helmet-like contraptions, one per chair, dangle from silver cords attached to the machine in this room's center. When the machine is activated as an action while two creatures wear the helmets, the creatures instantly switch bodies (an unwilling creature can make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw, causing the machine to fail on a successful saving throw). Each creature retains its personality and memories but exchanges all game statistics (its stat block or character sheet) with the other creature. Both creatures have the stunned condition for 1 minute as they adjust to their new bodies.

Treasure. Among the bottles and jars on the shelves are a *Potion of Greater Healing* and a *Potion of Vitality*.

22: Workers' Chambers

These sparse living quarters contain desks, beds, and shelves. Red doors connect areas 22b, 22c, and 22d to area 22a and the hallway to the west.

22a: Communal Room

A long metal table fills the center of this meeting room. Skeletal remains of three escaped prisoners are slumped on the table. The remains rise as three **skeletons** that attack anyone who enters the room.

A secret door is hidden in the northeast corner.

22b: Oily Floor

Spilled, flammable oil makes a 10-foot square of this room's floor difficult terrain.

22c: Glowing Orb

A glass orb wrapped in tattered oilcloth lies in one corner of this room. When uncovered, the orb shines light as if affected by the *Continual Flame* spell.

22d: Prisoner's Remains

Skeletal remains of an escaped prisoner lie in a corner of this chamber. Among the prisoner's gear are a suit of leather armor, a morningstar, a red key card, and a journal. The journal describes how the prisoner escaped area 13 via a secret door and found some equipment in area 16 before coming here.

22E: Head Steward's Office

A **stone golem** stands in one corner of this room. Still loyal to the steward who acquired it before the sphere's abandonment, the golem attacks any creature that enters the room.

The top drawer of the desk in this room contains a yellow key card.

23: Damselfly Bay

The door to this chamber is yellow.

A dragonfly-shaped spacecraft called a damselfly ship was once docked here. Some prisoners attempted to use the ship to leave the Donjon Sphere, but they crashed during the launch. The wreckage of the damselfly ship is scattered about area 14.

24: Escape Pod

Three metal platforms in this bay once held escape pods, only one of which remains; it resembles a large coffin made of semitranslucent orange crystal.

One Medium creature or two Small creatures can fit inside the escape pod. If the pod's door is closed, a creature inside the pod can use an action to pull a lever, causing the stanchions holding the pod in place to collapse, a hatch in the ceiling to open, and a pulse of energy to propel the pod through a narrow tunnel and out of the Donjon Sphere, leaving the pod adrift in the Astral Sea. The entire sequence takes 3 rounds after the lever is pulled.

25: Simulation Chambers

The sphere's creators used these rooms to create simulations of the natural environments of prisoners. Normally large and empty, the rooms can be filled with whatever illusions the experimenter in area 26 chooses. Windows look down on the two chambers from area 26, but those windows aren't visible from the simulation chambers. The two chambers are connected by a corridor that extends under area 26. The doors to this connecting corridor are blue.

25A: Western Simulator

This simulation chamber contains four **mimics** trained to play along with whatever illusion magic is cast on the room from area 26. As long as the mimics have a scene to take part in, they cooperate peacefully, taking on the roles of whatever furniture, fixtures, or other domestic trappings best suit the illusion. If the room isn't affected by an illusion, the mimics assume the forms of two metal chairs, a table, and a bed.

25B: Eastern Simulator

Two lawful evil **doppelgangers** occupy this room. The doppelgangers take on a variety of disguises to match whatever illusion magic is cast on the room from area 26. If the room isn't affected by an illusion, the doppelgangers assume the forms of nondescript Humanoids cloaked in silvery robes.

26: Observation Room

Wide windows along the east and west walls of this elevated room overlook the adjacent simulation chambers; the windows aren't visible from the chambers below. A chaotic evil **riffler** (see chapter 21) named Turner is in the room, trying to figure out the controls; Turner has a blue key card.

Simulation Controls

Beneath each window is a magical console that resembles a wide desk with a slanted top. Each console has AC 14, 25 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

A creature with a blue or yellow key card can use an action at the console to activate one of the following spells, targeting the simulation chamber to which the console is closest. The spell's area is restricted to the dimensions of the simulation chamber in which it is cast. Each spell can be cast once per simulation chamber per day:

- *Create Food and Water*
- *Major Image*
- *Mirage Arcane*
- *Sleep* (cast as a 4th-level spell)

27: Observatory

An alcove at one edge of this chamber holds a platform for the elevator to area 19.

A massive telescope protrudes from the center of this room, its lens aimed through a hole in the ceiling that extends all the way through the Donjon Sphere. A complex array of levers that lines the telescope can rotate the Donjon Sphere to allow the telescope to change its field of view. This telescope is a *Telescopic Teleporter* (see chapter 13). One or more characters could use it to escape the Donjon Sphere.

28: Crusher

Waste from area 17 above arrives here to be pulverized by sloped grinding gears. Sufficiently ground-up materials fall through a screen to a conveyor belt that transfers them to the forge in area 29.

Conveyors

Conveyor belts connect areas 28–31, allowing the steady transfer of materials between parts of the inner core. Each round on initiative count 20 (losing ties), the conveyors move anything on them 40 feet in the direction indicated on map 17.2.

A creature that enters a space of crushing gears for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage.

29: Forge

Crushed waste and scrap metal are transferred to this forge to be melted down and poured into molds. Two **fire elementals** tend the forge. They're friendly to anyone with a yellow key card, indifferent to those with a blue or red key card, and hostile to anyone without a key card.

The vat of molten metal here is 20 feet deep. A creature that enters the vat for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 27 (5d10) fire damage.

30: Shuffler

A drone patrol monitors this area at all times.

Conveyors transport glowing-hot metal plates from the forge to this large sorting area, where machinery rotates, flips, and folds them into smaller forms before they're sent on to area 31.

The machinery forms a shifting maze of hazards. Any creature other than a detention drone that ends its turn anywhere in this area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d10) fire damage, is lifted above the conveyor by the machinery, and has the grappled condition (escape DC 13).

31: Reconstructory

The Donjon Sphere constantly repairs itself. New metal plates, iron bars, and other construction materials are fabricated in this automated factory. Finished materials are removed from here into the maintenance shaft network, where they're handled by detention drones.

A creature that ends its turn in this area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Small and smaller creatures have advantage on this save. On a failed save, the creature takes 22 (4d10) slashing damage as automation moves it through the maintenance shaft network; the creature ends its turn inside a random maintenance shaft somewhere on map 17.2 (DM's discretion).

32: Control Gems

At each corner of this rectangular set of corridors is a circular room that contains a slaad control gem mounted in a filigreed contraption atop a metal pedestal. The gems control the planar portal in area 33, which in turn generates the Donjon Sphere's fiery power core. Opening off one of the corridors is a circular chamber that holds a platform for the elevator in area 19.

As an action, a character with thieves' tools can try to remove a control gem, doing so with a successful DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Alternatively, a character can remove a gem by force, taking an action and making a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failed check, the pedestal unleashes an arc of lightning that deals 14 (4d6) lightning damage to the character who attempted to remove the gem.

For each control gem removed, the portal in area 33 becomes less stable, which in turn affects the sphere's power core. The lights throughout the facility start blinking, and the sphere fills with the sounds of hissing steam and groaning metal. These effects intensify with each control gem removed.

If two gems are removed, the power core at the heart of the Donjon Sphere implodes after 2d8 hours. This is reduced to 1d4 hours if three gems are removed, and to just 1d4 minutes if all four gems are removed. Replacing all four gems before the power core implodes resets the time limit.

If the power core implodes, the planar portal in area 33 expands to the size of the Donjon Sphere. The prison and all its contents are transported to the Elemental Plane of Fire, then the portal collapses on itself and disappears.

33: Portal Chamber

The massive metal doors to this room are yellow.

A portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire floats in this room, reduced to a fiery orb six inches in diameter by the control gems in area 32. The portal floats between two black, triangular pillars that channel energy from the portal to the power core at the heart of the sphere.

Planar Portal

The portal in the center of this chamber is surrounded by a powerful energy field. A creature that comes within 15 feet of the portal for the first time on a turn must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) force damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Additionally, a creature that fails this saving throw or touches the portal is caught in its energy field. The creature is ejected from one of the sphere's poles (50 percent chance of either) at a speed of 1 mile per round; once free of the sphere, the creature can move normally using the rules for movement in the Astral Sea.

CHAPTER 18

VOID

THE VOID CARD IS PERHAPS THE MOST dreaded draw from a *Deck of Many Things*. The individual who draws this card is consigned to a terrible fate: their body collapses while their soul is imprisoned in a far-off object. This poses challenges for the DM, the party, and the imprisoned character's player. Where has the soul been taken? How does the party recover it? And what is the character's player to do while their character is inactive?

This chapter presents the House of Cards, a dungeon in a remote demiplane created when the Void card is drawn. This is where the character's soul is used as bait to lure the rest of the characters to the lair of a predatory monster. This chapter begins with advice for DMs and players facing the challenges posed when a single character is separated from everyone else. This situation can be handled in many ways, and DMs can choose an approach that suits their players and their campaign.

Drawing the Void Card

When a character draws the Void card, the House of Cards is called into existence in its own demiplane. The character's soul is transported there, trapped inside a porcelain mask in the lair of a breath drinker, a monster presented in this chapter. If the characters can obtain the mask, they can reunite the soul of their fellow adventurer with that character's body.

You don't have to use the House of Cards if you want the soul of the Void's victim to be trapped in a location that's part of your ongoing campaign. Regardless of where the soul is trapped, you should keep the character's player engaged until their character is rescued—which could take several sessions.

One approach is for the player to play a temporary character. Many players are eager to try out new character ideas; if your player has a backup character in mind, the problem is solved. But some players are reluctant to swap characters. If they joined the game to play a particular character, they might not have fun playing a different one. Even if the player has no reservations, making a new character and gracefully integrating that character into the party can take time.

Another approach, which avoids those challenges, is for the player to continue playing their original character on a desperate quest to rescue their own soul.

Playing a Temporary Character

Playing a new character for a brief period can be fun and liberating, giving the player a chance to experiment with new class features in a low-stakes environment. For example, a player who has avoided spellcasting so far might want to give a cleric or wizard a try.

The player should determine who their character is and why the character suddenly appears when the party interacts with a *Deck of Many Things*. Consider linking the character to one of the factions below to connect them to the party's adventures:

Established Ally or Organization. The temporary character is someone the adventurers know. If the characters have powerful contacts, this is the perfect opportunity for one of those contacts to repay a favor to the adventurers by lending their support. Perhaps a beloved ally has expressed a desire to come on adventures before. Temples, governments, guilds, and other societies the party has previously dealt with can all provide allies to help the adventurers in their hour of need.

Herald of the Comet. The temporary character is an agent of the Heralds of the Comet (see chapter 12), a group that seeks the original *Deck of Many Things* for its own purposes. While the leaders of this apocalyptic cult are nihilists intent on the destruction of the multiverse, many lower-ranking members believe the organization has altruistic intentions and works for the greater good. This particular herald seeks insight that might be found within the House of Cards.

Solar Bastion Agent. The temporary character is an agent of the Solar Bastion (see chapter 10) who has been tracking the party's *Deck of Many Things*. This character is eager to help recover the lost soul; after all, the Solar Bastion was founded in response to a mortal being imprisoned by the Void. The character understands some of the Void's workings and can assist in opening the way to the House of Cards.

Making a new character takes time. Place an encounter with a *Deck of Many Things* at the end of a session so the player whose character has been imprisoned can make a temporary character between sessions. A player who is happy with an iconic combination of background and class might be able to put together a character during a short break with the help of online tools. If you need the new character immediately, you can turn to stat blocks; the **bandit captain**, **berserker**, **cult fanatic**, **knight**, **priest**, and **spy** are great places to start. In this book, consider the **initiate of the comet** (see chapter 12) or **Solar Bastion knight** (see chapter 10).

Player Consent

Some players might find the sudden removal of their character upsetting. If taking a character out of play will be too upsetting for the player, use the option that allows the player to play the same character. Before their character draws the card, consider taking the player aside to let them know what's about to happen, or give their character a premonition.

If a player spends several sessions with a temporary character, let the player choose whether to apply any experience earned to either the temporary character or their original character.

Playing the Same Character

A character who falls victim to the Void card doesn't have to collapse into a coma; instead, they could have one chance to save themselves, with time running out.

This approach revises the effect of the Void card; the character loses their soul but not their capacity to think and act. At first, the effects of the card might seem minor, and it might not be clear exactly what has happened. The character might grow lightheaded or briefly fall unconscious, for example. But upon awakening, the character feels a profound emptiness and sense of loss. Everything feels distant and muted, as if their thoughts and feelings were trapped behind glass. Soon, the seriousness of the problem becomes clear.

Soul Loss

The soulless character has disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks. Any effects that perceive, affect, or manipulate a creature's soul that are used on the character fail automatically.

Deteriorating Vessel

Whenever the soulless character finishes a long rest, the character gains 1 level of exhaustion that can't be removed until the soul is restored. The character grows more listless and withdrawn as the exhaustion builds.

Instinctive Draw

The soulless character feels a pull toward what they've lost. If you're using the House of Cards, the character senses that a *Deck of Many Things* can bring them where they need to be.

House of Cards

The *Deck of Many Things* creates the House of Cards—this demiplane dungeon doesn't exist until the Void card is drawn. The soul of the character who draws the card is trapped in a porcelain mask that resembles that character's face. The mask waits in a bound void within the House of Cards (area 23), where an entity from the Far Realm known as a breath drinker preys on any who come to rescue the trapped soul.

Entering and Leaving the House

While the House of Cards exists, spells such as *Plane Shift* can access it if the caster knows where they're trying to go. But the *Deck of Many Things* can also provide access to the dungeon. A creature touching the deck from which the Void card was drawn knows the House of Cards can be accessed in the following ways:

The Entrance of the House of Cards

Life Force. As an action, a creature touching the deck can command the House of Cards to open. The deck absorbs life energy, giving the creature 5 levels of exhaustion. These levels can be distributed among up to five willing creatures touching the deck. Then each creature touching the deck is transported to area 1 of the House of Cards.

Spell Energy. If a creature touching the deck casts a spell that teleports one or more targets, instead of the spell's usual effect, each creature touching the deck is transported to area 1 of the House of Cards.

House of Cards Features

The House of Cards has the following features:

Construction. The surfaces are composed of cards of various sizes from the *Deck of Many Things*. Unless otherwise noted, the cards don't sit flush; the walls, floor, and ceiling are irregular but not difficult terrain. All the cards except for the Void card are visible throughout the House of Cards. Damaging the cards causes more copies to shuffle out and replace the damaged cards, making it impossible to tunnel through surfaces. Unless otherwise noted, ceilings are 20 feet high in rooms and 10 feet high in corridors.

Doors. Visible doors are single large cards; they are as strong as reinforced iron, with AC 19, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. The card face displayed on each door corresponds to the room the door opens to.

Lighting. Unless a location specifies otherwise, rooms and corridors are lit by ambient dim light.

Secret Doors. Secret doors are made of many small cards that shuffle out of the way when the door is opened. Creatures can locate a secret door by examining or physically searching the door's space and succeeding on a Wisdom (Perception) check. The DC is 15 unless otherwise specified. In corridors accessed only by secret doors, the backs of those doors are obvious.

House of Cards Locations

The following locations are keyed to map 18.1.

1: Entrance

> Every surface of this irregularly shaped room is made from cards of various sizes from the Deck of Many Things. Some show their intricately patterned backs, while others show their faces. Four large cards that serve as doors lead from the chamber: Rogue to the north, Ruin to the east, Gem to the south, and Flames to the west. In the center of the room's floor, a card depicting the Key glows brightly.

Characters who enter the House of Cards appear in this room, standing on the glowing Key card in the floor.

Key. The Key card in the floor fills the room with bright light. Anyone touching the card knows it can be used to return home; any character who touches it and uses an action to activate it vanishes, leaving the demiplane and reappearing in the closest unoccupied space to where they were before they appeared in the House of Cards.

Void Entrance. The entrance to the Void chamber (area 23) is hidden in this room, beneath the Key card. A character who examines the glowing Key card and succeeds on a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check discovers the card could swivel, but the card doesn't move. The only way to rotate the card and reveal what lies beneath it is to use the *Chime of Opening* from the Key room (area 18) on it. This reveals the Void card beneath—the only such card in the entire dungeon. A creature that steps onto the Void card is teleported to area 23.

2: Gem

> This room's card walls are smooth and resemble the facets of a gem. A bristling crystal formation six feet high occupies the center of the chamber, filling the room with a soft rainbow glow and faint chiming sound. The colors of the gemstone formation constantly shift. A door displaying the Fool card stands on the east wall, and another—showing only the back of a card from the Deck of Many Things—is to the north.

This room is brightly lit by the gem formation's light.

Gem Formation. The crystal formation doesn't just change color; it constantly changes from one type of gemstone into another. As an action, a creature can try to carefully remove pieces of the formation with a Dexterity or Intelligence check (their choice) using jeweler's or mason's tools, or by making an attack with a melee weapon. Compare the creature's ability check or attack roll total to the Gem Shards table.

A gem of the listed value falls to the floor. If the result indicates thunder damage, a terrible shrieking accompanies the cracking crystal. Each creature in the room must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking the indicated damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. After the gem formation yields a total of 3d6 gem fragments, it goes silent, turns dark gray, and can't create any more gems.

Gem Shards

Attack Roll or Check Total	Thunder Damage	Gemstone Value
5 or lower	33 (6d10)	10 gp
10–14	22 (4d10)	50 gp
15–19	11 (2d10)	100 gp
20–24	5 (1d10)	500 gp
25–29	—	1,000 gp
30 or higher	—	5,000 gp

3: Fool

> The face of the Fool card silently jeers from the walls of this room, and shimmering fields of light hang in the air, reflecting those within like fun-house mirrors. A door to the west shows the Gem card, while a door to the east displays the Sun card.

Though they reflect like mirrors, the shimmering fields aren't physical objects and can't be broken.

Reflections. Reflections in this room take on a life of their own, taunting the creatures who cast them. A creature that converses with its own reflection must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or take 5 (2d4) psychic damage.

A demiplane can be a wonderful place to escape the tumult of the multiverse—provided it isn't haunted by a hungry Far Realm aberration, of course.

4: Sun

Thick vines cover every wall in this chamber, which splits into three parallel hallways separated by walls that don't quite reach the ceiling. The ceiling emanates a scorching, fiery light throughout the entire area.

At the east end of the southernmost hall, a comically oversized golden key is mounted on a sword rack. At the east end of the middle hall is a pedestal shaped like bird's talons clutching a polished silver orb. The east end of the northernmost hall is a door illustrating the Moon card, in the center of which is an exaggerated keyhole. A door to the west displays the Fool card.

This room is a version of the Surface of the Sun trap in chapter 4, but it differs from that trap in the following ways:

Hotter Ceiling. Characters inside the room take 11 (2d10) fire damage each round, instead of 5 (1d10).

Moon Door. The door from the trap in the final hall depicts the Moon, not a skull.

Shorter Halls. The three halls in this trap are far shorter than those in the trap in chapter 4.

5: Moon

In the center of this roughly rectangular chamber is a deep, silver, bowl-shaped depression. Shallow stone channels in the floor slope toward the bowl. Sewer pipes jut from the ceiling over each channel.

A portcullis in the north wall blocks a door bearing the image of the Donjon card. On the stone arch above the portcullis, a large glyph depicts a waxing crescent moon, its right edge illuminated by the faintest sliver of light. Next to the portcullis, a large iron lever juts from the floor.

Like the Sun room (area 4), this chamber is an elaborate trap. It is based on the Test of the Empty Moon trap from chapter 4, with these differences:

Northern Door. A door stands behind the portcullis to the north; this door leads to area 6. If the characters entered through this door, the portcullis blocks their way.

Southern Door. The door leading to area 4 is locked, but it can be unlocked from this side. Alternatively, the characters might unlock it from area 4 using the key in that room.

6: Donjon

Chains drape this room, bird cages of black metal hang from the ceiling, and larger cages and iron maidens stand on the floor. A door to the north bears the Talons card, while another to the west bears the Fates card. A door to the south shows the Moon card.

A **chain devil** lurks among the chains and cages that fill this room. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check spot the devil. The devil attacks when a creature approaches it, tries to move past it toward the Talons door, or tries to open the Fates door; the devil uses its Animate Chains ability to attack foes with the chains draping the room.

Cages. As a bonus action on its turn, the chain devil can throw a Small or Medium creature restrained by it or by an animated chain into one of the cages in the room, whereupon the cage's door slams shut and locks. Each cage is made of iron and has AC 19, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A character can pick the cage's lock with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check bends the cage's bars enough to escape.

Treasure. The chain devil has a set of *Dimensional Shackles* hanging from its belt and might use them on an incapacitated enemy.

7: Talons

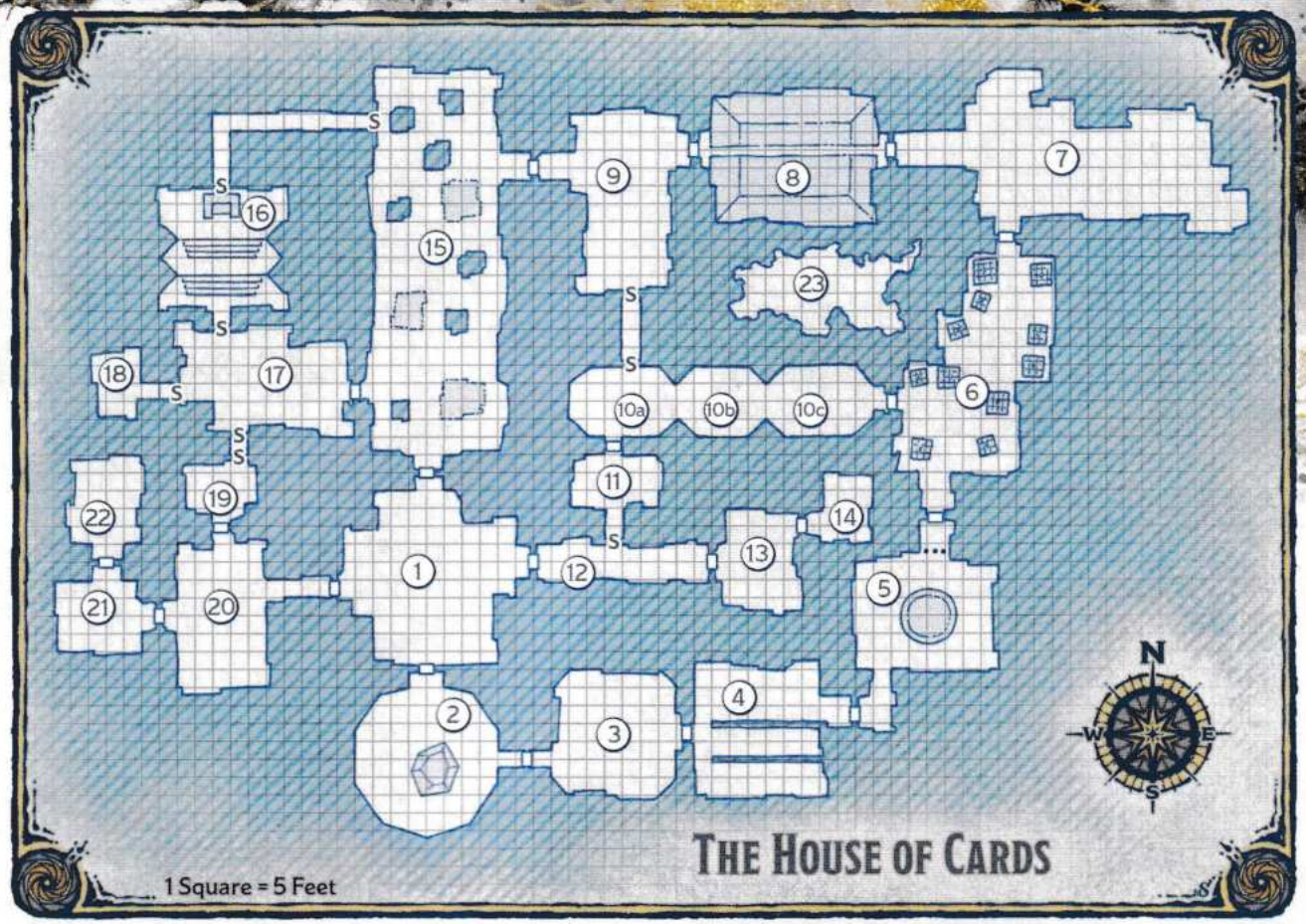
This cavernous chamber smells like an animal's den. Two **talon beasts** (see chapter 21) lair here. They try to steal the characters' magic before darting away to feed.

Doors. The door to the west wall shows the Balance card. The door to the south shows the Donjon card.

8: Balance

A narrow wooden beam spans the length of this chamber, from the west door, which bears the image of the Star card, to the east door, which bears the image of the Talons card. The beam crosses a twenty-five-foot-deep pit filled with grinding, blood-stained gears. The walls are metal cards devoid of grip.

Like the Sun and Moon rooms (areas 4 and 5), this chamber is an elaborate trap. See the Balance and Ruin trap in chapter 4 for complete details. This trap differs from the one described there in the following ways:



Map 18.1: The House of Cards

Shorter Beam. The room and beam aren't as long.

East to West. When the party enters, the weight is on the east side of the room. Any weight on the west side of the beam causes it to lower, depressing the pressure plate that activates the metal walls.

9: Star

> A swirling starlight glow hovers above the floor here. The door in the east wall is the Balance card, and the door in the west wall is the Rogue card. The chamber is colder than other areas you've visited in the House of Cards.

The starlight glow is a conduit to a living star (see the "Variant: Servants of Living Stars" sidebar in chapter 21 for examples). A creature that spends 10 minutes concentrating on the glow can contact the star and ask it questions as if using the *Contact Other Plane* spell, including all the risks associated with that spell. A character who examines the starlight glow and succeeds on a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check intuits its purpose and property.

Secret Door. A secret door in the south wall leads to the Fates room (area 10). This door is easily visible if approached from the corridor to area 10.

10: Fates

Each of these three octagonal chambers is home to a **fate hag** (see chapter 21) . The hags all appear to be the same human woman in different stages of life. Each hag offers a boon to one character who answers a question truthfully. The hags are indifferent to the characters and attack only in self-defense.

10a: Future. The future fate hag appears as an older woman. The first time a character tries talking to her, she asks what the character fears most. If the character answers honestly, the hag grants that character the *Charm of the Sage* (see chapter 8).

10b: Present. The present fate hag appears as an adult woman. The first time a character tries talking to her, she asks what the character desires most. If the character answers honestly, the hag grants that character the *Charm of the Fates* (see chapter 8).

10c: Past. The past fate hag appears as an adolescent girl. The first time a character tries talking to her, she asks what the character regrets most. If the character answers truthfully, the hag grants them the benefit of either a *Greater Restoration* spell or a *Heal* spell (the player's choice).

Doors. A door to the south bears the face of the Jester. The east door shows the Donjon. A secret door in the north wall leads to the Star room (area 9); it is easily visible if approached from the corridor to area 9.

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11: Jester

This room is plastered with Jester cards, and the floor is scattered with soft cushions. The door to the north bears the Fates card. A section of wall-cards shuffles aside, admitting a gnome-like man before shuffling closed. "Hello!" the newcomer says brightly. "You're uninvited, but if you answer my riddle, or better yet tell me one of your own, you can make yourself at home!"

The gregarious little man is Bindle, a **riffler** (see chapter 21). He introduces himself and offers the party his card: a nonmagical Jester card.

Riddles. Bindle asks the characters a riddle of your creation or one from chapter 4. Alternatively, the characters can ask Bindle a riddle of their own. If the characters answer Bindle's riddle or ask one, Bindle is delighted and allows them to stay in his room. With Bindle's blessing, the characters can rest here whenever and for as long as they wish.

If the characters refuse to participate in Bindle's riddle game, he flees and brings some of the dungeon's other inhabitants (such as the **talon beasts** in area 7 or the **spies** in area 15) here to attack them.

Treasure. If the characters continue to trade riddles with Bindle, answering at least one of his own while also asking one or more, the nonmagical Jester card he gave them gains a magical property (see the "Effects of Single Cards" section in chapter 2).

Secret Door. A secret door leads south to area 12.

12: Ruin

This irregular corridor's floor is uneven and leads to a door displaying the Skull to the east and another showing the back of a card to the west. The Ruin card is repeated on many of the cards that form the walls.

The floor of this corridor is difficult terrain.

Secret Door. A secret door in the north wall leads to the Jester room (area 11) and is easily visible from this side.

Traps. The ten Ruin cards in the room's walls are magical traps. Whenever a creature starts its turn in the hallway or uses its movement, action, bonus action, or reaction here, one of the traps in the hallway triggers. When that occurs, one of the Ruin cards flies toward the creature and makes a Ruinous Card attack:

Ruinous Card. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 60 ft., the creature that triggered the attack. *Hit:* 22 (4d10) necrotic damage. In addition, any nonmagical armor or shield worn or carried by the target (50 percent chance of either if the creature has both) is partly degraded by rust, rot, or dry cracking. The armor or shield takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed. *Hit or Miss:* The card is destroyed.

Successfully casting the *Dispel Magic* spell (DC 15) nullifies all the corridor's traps for 1 minute.

13: Skull

The cards that form this room depict the painted skulls of various creatures. The door to the east shows the Sage card; the door to the west shows the Ruin card. A spectral, skeletal figure swathed in robes of shadow coalesces in the center of the chamber. It says, in a dry, whispering voice, "Face me alone and prevail, and the path to wisdom opens. Fall, and you fall forever."

The creature here is an **avatar of death** as created by the Skull card from a *Deck of Many Things* (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for the avatar's stat block). The first creature that replies to the avatar, attacks it, or tries to open or damage the Sage door becomes bound to the avatar, and the avatar attacks the bound creature. If any other creature takes hostile action against the avatar or restores hit points to the bound creature, a new avatar appears and is bound to the creature that intervened. All avatars must be defeated before the Sage door can be opened. The avatars fight until destroyed. Once defeated, they don't reappear even if the adventurers pass through this room again.

Escaping the Room. The Sage door can't be opened or damaged by any means until all avatars of death in the room are destroyed. Spells such as *Gaseous Form* or *Dimension Door* can be used to bypass the door, but it won't open from the other side as long as an avatar is in this room.

14: Sage

A luminous figure shimmers in the air. Its blank face floats above its humanlike torso, which fades into nothing just above the waist. "Welcome," it intones in a melodious voice. "You have faced death to find wisdom, and I honor your achievement. I shall answer one question to steer you on your way."

The apparition is an extension of the Sage card. It answers one question posed to it as if the asker were using the *Divination* spell with no chance of a random reading. The apparition respects the spirit

of the question asked; it doesn't twist its answers or waste an answer on a frivolous question asked without thought.

If asked about how to retrieve a soul from the House of Cards, it answers, "The Rogue guards the Puzzle, beyond which hides the Key. But the lock itself lies beneath your first steps."

15: Rogue

This massive chamber is dotted with thick, irregular columns of stacked cards, which make it difficult to see far into the room. Rogues leer from the room's card faces. The door to the east is the Star card, while the door to the south shows the back of a card. The door to the west displays the Puzzle card.

Three of the columns in this room, colored in a lighter blue tone on the map, are illusions. Within them hide a number of creatures equal to the number of characters in the party, each identical in appearance to one character or to an ally accompanying the party. The creatures use the **spy** stat block with the following changes: they are neutral evil Fey who speak all languages known to the characters in the room. These creatures can see through the illusory columns as if the columns were ghostly images; casting *Dispel Magic* on an illusory pillar causes it to vanish.

The Fey try to kill the characters and fight to the death. They use hit-and-run tactics to launch attacks, ducking behind and hiding within illusory columns when possible to create the impression that they vanish.

Secret Door. A secret door in the west wall leads to the Throne room (area 16). This door is easily visible when approached from the corridor to area 16.

16: Throne

Steps ascend to a dais that holds an elaborate throne made of cards.

The first creature that sits on the throne gains the *Charm of the Throne* supernatural gift (see chapter 8). While the charm lasts, however, the creature has disadvantage on Charisma checks and expects its every command to be quickly obeyed. This charm can be bestowed only once, and it can be removed with the *Remove Curse* spell.

Secret Doors. There are two secret doors: one behind the throne, which leads to area 15, and one in the south wall, which leads to area 17. The door behind the throne is easily visible when approached from the corridor to area 15.

17: Puzzle

A stone pedestal in the center of the room holds a bloodstained basin. A simple copper knife with a razor edge rests on the side of the basin. Words are inscribed on the basin's rim.

This room has the only path to the Key room (area 18), and it also provides a way to reach the Knight room (area 19) without passing through the Flames room (area 20).

Secret Doors. The secret doors in this room can't be located without a *True Seeing* spell or similar magic.

Basin. The inscription on the basin reads, "Once for reward, twice for compassion, thrice for salvation." A character cut by the copper knife who bleeds into the basin takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and their hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the character finishes a long rest. This effect is a property of the basin; the knife is nonmagical.

After a character bleeds into the basin, the secret door leading north to the Throne room (area 16) is revealed by a glowing outline. Repeating the bleeding process within 10 minutes, whether by the same creature or a different one, reveals the secret door to area 19. If repeated again, it reveals the secret door to area 18.

18: Key

A raised pedestal bearing the Key card stands before the entrance. A silver chime floats above the pedestal's surface, rotating slowly and ringing softly.

This is a safe room where the characters can rest.

Treasure. The object above the pedestal is a *Chime of Opening*. It is inscribed with a small key and the following phrase in Common: "At the beginning, I open the end." When a character carrying the chime moves toward area 1, they hear a faint ringing that grows louder the closer they get to the Key card depicted in that room. Once they're in area 1, anyone in that room can hear the sound.

19: Knight

A being composed of golden light and clad in plate armor rests on one knee in the center of the room. Chains of shadow wrap around its neck, wrists, and waist, binding it to the floor. A door to the south shows the Flames card.

The figure is a lawful good **knight** and is a Celestial instead of a Humanoid. It implores the characters to free it, offering to protect and aid them while they explore the House of Cards. The knight is incapable of breaking its own chains.

The chains holding the knight have AC 19, 30 hit points, vulnerability to radiant damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. They can be broken as an action with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. They have no locks, but a spell of 3rd level or higher that creates bright light destroys the chains if they are within the bright light's radius.

Secret Door. A secret door to the north leads to the Puzzle room (area 17). This door is easily visible when approached from the corridor to area 17.

20: Flames

This lavishly appointed study smells of subtly sweet incense, and soft music plays from no obvious source. A large Flames card on the south wall is framed like a fireplace. The illustrated fire dances and crackles, giving off pleasant warmth. A door to the north bears the Knight card, while a door to the west bears the Euryale card. A door to the east shows the back of a card.

A handsome human man dressed in rich robes sits in an overstuffed chair, reading a book.

The reader is Avalion, a **glabrezu** in human shape. He greets the characters amiably and offers the hospitality of his study, inquiring about their business. Whether or not they're forthcoming, Avalion knows they're here for a soul, which he offers to help them find.

If the adventurers agree to his help, Avalion selects one willing character to receive the *Charm of the Flames* (see chapter 8), marking that character's skin with an infernal rune. If the character whose soul has been lost is adventuring with the party, Avalion selects that character. So long as the character has the charm, Avalion knows their location and can communicate telepathically with them. He then directs the characters to the Puzzle room (area 17), telling them "the key can be found from there." If the adventurers already have the *Chime of Opening* from area 18, he laughs and says, "You already have everything you need."

If the characters try to leave without agreeing to his help, he politely informs them he can't allow that and urges them to reconsider. If they continue trying to leave—or if the adventurers penetrate his disguise and take action against him—he assumes his true form and attacks.

21: Euryale

A snake-haired woman in a flowing robe stands at the center of the room, scowling. She is surrounded by similar visages on the Euryale cards around the walls, while a door to the north displays the Comet card. "Oh good, heroes," she sneers, the final word dripping with contempt. "Shall we get this over with?"

The **medusa** here answers to the name Euryale, and though she expects to be attacked, she doesn't initiate battle. This isn't the same Euryale described in chapter 22. If the characters refrain from attacking and show her courtesy or at least respect, she lets them pass unharmed.

Dying Curse. If the medusa is killed, any character who targeted the medusa with an attack or spell that deals damage is cursed; the cursed character has disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws made with their highest ability score (if the character has their highest ability score in more than one ability, the DM should choose one). The curse can't be broken while the House of Cards exists. Otherwise, a *Remove Curse* or similar magic ends it.

22: Comet

A being composed of swirling dust and ice hovers at the far end of the room. It booms in a hollow voice, "Prove yourself in single combat and be rejuvenated!"

The creature is an elemental composed of comet ice and dust. It uses the stat block of an **air elemental** but also has immunity to cold damage. If a single character defeats the elemental unaided, that character immediately gains the benefits of finishing a long rest.

23: Void

The only way to reach this chamber is to teleport here from area 1.

A swirling veil of faint, silvery mist encircles an otherwise empty, silent, dark void. A single spot of gleaming light hangs in the center of the space in the form of a white, porcelain mask shot through with golden cracks that resemble veins.

This room is the heart of the House of Cards. The mask contains the soul of the character who drew the Void card. The mask is guarded by a **breath drinker** (see the accompanying stat block). The

A PORCELAIN MASK FLOATS WITHIN THE VOID AT THE HEART OF THE HOUSE OF CARDS.

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breath drinker has the invisible condition when the characters arrive and attacks as soon as they approach the mask. The breath drinker focuses its attacks on anyone trying to claim the mask, grappling and dragging them away as it feasts on their soul.

Gravity. The void has no gravity, and creatures and objects simply hang in space. A creature can hover and move by thought with a flying speed of 30 feet, or by using its own flying speed if it has one.

Misty Boundary. Mist encircles the void, replacing walls, floor, and ceiling. Anyone who moves through the mist vanishes and reappears on the opposite side of the void; for example, a character moving through the south wall appears adjacent to the north wall.

Mask. The mask's features resemble those of the character who drew the Void card from the deck, and it is a perfect fit for that character. A creature that tries to take the mask must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw; this save is made with disadvantage if the breath drinker is alive. On a failed save, the mask slips from the creature's grasp but remains in its space, where another creature can try to take it. When the mask is placed on the face of the soulless character, the character's soul is returned and the House of Cards collapses (see "Conclusion" below).

Conclusion

The adventure in the House of Cards concludes when the mask is placed on the face of the soulless character or if the soulless character dies before their soul is returned.

When the mask is placed on the face of the soulless character, the House of Cards tumbles down, and the entire demiplane collapses. The adventurers return to where they were before they entered the House of Cards, or in the nearest unoccupied space.

If the soulless creature dies before the mask is placed on their face, the House of Cards collapses as described above, and the soulless character is slain forever. Not even a *Wish* spell can return them to life.

Option: Mask Bound

Instead of dissolving, the mask could endure with the character's soul remaining bound to it. In this case, the character must wear the mask to function. If the mask is removed, the character's body has the incapacitated condition until the mask is returned to the character's face.

Breath Drinker

Breath drinkers are Aberrations that invade the multiverse from the Far Realm. They drift through reality like living voids, remaining unseen while searching for souls to consume. When they strike, breath drinkers consume a victim's personality and identity, ultimately drawing out and devouring the unfortunate being's soul. Breath drinkers avoid necrotic energy because it amplifies the void at the core of their existence, rapidly causing the creatures to devour themselves.

Cunning stalkers, breath drinkers are usually solitary. Occasionally they serve powerful Far Realm entities or Elder Evils, consuming life and souls for their masters. The first breath drinker manifested in the multiverse when the Void card was first drawn from the original *Deck of Many Things*.

Breath Drinker

Medium Aberration, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 157 (21d8 + 63)
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (–3)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +7
Skills Perception +7, Stealth +9, Survival +7
Damage Vulnerabilities necrotic
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison, radiant
Condition Immunities grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Incorporeal Movement. The breath drinker can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Radiant Absorption. When the breath drinker is subjected to radiant damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the radiant damage dealt.

Actions

Multiattack. The breath drinker makes two Enervating Claw attacks. It can also use Drink Breath.

Enervating Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) necrotic damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, it has the grappled condition (escape DC 18). The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Drink Breath. The breath drinker targets a creature that has the incapacitated condition or that the breath drinker is grappling and that isn't a Construct or an Undead. The target must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 36 (8d8) necrotic damage, and its Charisma score is reduced by 1d6. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If this reduces the target's Charisma to 0, the target dies. Until the breath drinker dies, the dead target can't be returned to life by any means short of divine intervention. On a successful save, the target takes half as much necrotic damage only. On a successful or failed save, the breath drinker regains a number of hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt.

Invisibility. The breath drinker has the invisible condition. This invisibility ends immediately after the breath drinker hits or misses with an attack roll or uses Drink Breath.

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CHAPTER 19

SKULL

THIS CHAPTER DETAILS THE GRIM HARROW, doomed Undead that seek the *Deck of Many Things* in all its forms so they can destroy it and end their own existence. But as the *Deck of Many Things* has multiplied through the multiverse, the Grim Harrow's goal has become increasingly difficult. Nevertheless, this menace scours the multiverse for any version of the deck, destroying anyone or anything that gets in the way. Consisting of Undead creatures of varying strength—from shadows and carrion birds to powerful champions of violence and despair—the Grim Harrow is an antagonist for campaigns of all levels, whether a *Deck of Many Things* appears in your campaign or not.

Intended for Dungeon Masters, this chapter describes the Grim Harrow's motives and methods, as well as the dreadful demiplane that serves as the creatures' home. Stat blocks for several members of the Grim Harrow appear at the end of the chapter.

The Grim Harrow

When the Skull card is drawn from a *Deck of Many Things*, an avatar of death appears, hell-bent on slaying its summoner. In this way, the infamous deck has claimed many mortal souls.

These souls don't pass peacefully into the afterlife, nor do they simply vanish. Marked by the avatar of death, these souls instead rise as evil Undead linked to the deck. For centuries, these Undead aimlessly wandered the multiverse, until a grim champion began seeking out its fellow victims and forged those it found into a force it called the Grim Harrow. Eventually, the Grim Harrow found a faerie demiplane called the Gardens of Delight. Desiring a home base for their effort to destroy *Decks of Many Things*, the Undead killed or drove off all who dwelled there and claimed the gardens as their own.

Over time, the necrotic magic of the Grim Harrow corrupted the Gardens of Delight, warping the demiplane into the Gardens of Decay. As the demiplane became bound to the Grim Harrow, so too did the hunt's members become bound to the demiplane.

The Grim Harrow uses the magic of the gardens to search the multiverse for *Decks of Many Things*. When these Undead find signs of a deck, their harrowing hunts begin anew, and woe to those who get between them and their prey!

Goals

The Grim Harrow's primary purpose is to destroy all copies of the *Deck of Many Things*. Its members believe destroying the decks will end the doom that binds them to an Undead existence, allowing all the victims of the avatar of death to truly die at last. This thesis, however, can be proven only by the final destruction of all the decks—a nigh impossible task since the decks manifest on worlds throughout the infinite multiverse.

The Grim Harrow seeks any information regarding decks, those who've had a deck, and those who know the decks' secrets. These foul menaces are wary of agents of the Solar Bastion (see chapter 10), as well as rifflers (see chapter 21), strange Fey who are drawn to the decks. Members of the Grim Harrow search for tools that might help them in

ALEX DIAZ

A Harrowing Hunt

their mission, including powerful magic items, rare spells, and depositories of ancient lore.

Since making the Gardens of Decay their home, the creatures of the Grim Harrow can leave it only for limited periods (see the "Gardens of Decay" section later in this chapter for more information), so they seek out ordinary mortals or unusual extraplanar allies to be their agents on other worlds. The leaders of the Grim Harrow—fearsome Undead called grim champions—select privileged servants to leave the gardens on harrowing hunts or other key missions. Between hunts, most members of the Grim Harrow wallow in misery within the gardens, tormented by their own hateful existence.

Joining the Grim Harrow

Most members of the Grim Harrow are souls slain by the avatar of death (as summoned by a *Deck of Many Things*). However, not all such souls are deemed worthy of joining the group.

Upon dying at the hands of the avatar, souls appear in the Gardens of Decay, a demiplane detailed later in this chapter. The souls are permanently bound to this demiplane and take on the form of evil Undead such as **shadows** or **ghouls**. Many of these creatures wander the demiplane, pursuing their cruel compulsions.

New arrivals are spotted by the grim champions or their lieutenants, who seek out potential hunters and coerce them into service through temptation or the threat of violence. The ideal candidate for the Grim Harrow is intelligent enough to pursue leads, powerful enough to claim the deck from anyone who resists, and obedient enough to do what the grim champions tell it. But this combination is rare, so the grim champions must often settle for imperfect servants.

The most common recruits to the Grim Harrow are **revenants**, **specters**, **wights**, and **wraiths**. **Ghosts** and **mummies** are also counted among the group's members, and the lieutenants of the grim champions are typically **death knights**, **liches**, and **vampires**. If you have access to *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*, sword wraiths and deathlocks make excellent additions to the Grim Harrow.

Harrowing Hunts

The Grim Harrow keeps a close eye on the planar portals contained in a glass tower within the Gardens of Decay known as Death's Aperture (see the "Glass Arboretum" section below). The Grim Harrow travels via Death's Aperture while pursuing a *Deck of Many Things* or the organization's other

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interests. These missions are known as harrowing hunts, or simply hunts.

The leader of a hunt is handpicked by one of the grim champions and is usually the most powerful Undead on the hunt, although sometimes a weak but clever Undead is given command over powerful but less intelligent ones. On rare occasions—usually when the Skull card has been drawn and the Grim Harrow has a chance to destroy a copy of the *Deck of Many Things*—one of the grim champions leads the hunt themself.

The leader of the hunt rides a mount—typically a **warhorse skeleton** or **nightmare**, but sometimes a more unusual creature. The hunt is also served by flocks of **harrow hawks** (see chapter 21) that function as spies and messengers, along with **harrow hounds** (this stat block appears later in this chapter) who find and track prey.

Once the hunt begins, the Undead move as quickly as possible to complete their mission. If a *Deck of Many Things* is present, the hunt tries to kill whoever has it, then destroy the deck or, failing that, return the deck to the Gardens of Decay. If the deck isn't the immediate object of the hunt, the members of the hunt spread out, seeking anyone who might've encountered the deck. After centuries of activity, the Grim Harrow has visited many worlds throughout the multiverse and has contacts and agents everywhere. Many of these informers don't know who or what the Grim Harrow really is; they know only that the hunters are terrifying and will kill anyone in their way. Hunters seeking the deck periodically reestablish their authority over these contacts through fear or bribery, collecting any intelligence they have concerning the *Deck of Many Things* and related topics, such as the Solar Bastion (see chapter 10), Heralds of the Comet (see chapter 12), and rifflers (see chapter 21).

Because the Undead are bound to the Gardens of Decay, the hunt must end after 24 hours. At that time, any Undead on the hunt vanish, reappearing in the Gardens of Decay. There, they report to the grim champions and await the next hunt.

Gardens of Decay

The Gardens of Decay is a dreadful realm overflowing with deathly energy. Once a beautiful faerie realm called the Gardens of Delight, the demiplane was conquered and corrupted by the Grim Harrow. The plane's titular gardens are wide expanses of corrupted land, each representing a different means of death. At the center sits the Glass Arboretum, which holds Death's Aperture—the demiplane's primary entry and exit point.

Gardens of Decay Features

Unless otherwise noted, the areas within the Gardens of Decay have the following features:

Brink of Death. Creatures within the Gardens of Decay have disadvantage on death saving throws. If a Humanoid dies within the gardens, it rises as a **shadow** in the Glass Arboretum in 1d4 days unless it is raised from the dead before then. A creature turned into a shadow in this way can't be returned to life by any means.

Fettered Souls. If a creature bound to the Gardens of Decay travels to a different plane, that creature vanishes after 24 hours, reappearing in the Gardens of Decay where it left or in the nearest unoccupied space.

Weather. The sky above the Gardens of Decay is perpetually overcast. There is no sun or moon, and the lighting never changes.

Gardens of Decay Locations

The following locations appear on map 19.1.

Glass Arboretum

A strangely vibrant beacon of colors and iridescent light, the Glass Arboretum sits at the heart of the Gardens of Decay. At first it appears to be a lush conservatory filled with vivid flowers and verdant trees, but closer inspection reveals that the plant life is entirely artificial, constructed entirely of beautiful, fragile glass sculptures.

Death's Aperture. A 20-foot-tall octagonal tower, known as Death's Aperture, rises above the glittering landscape of the Glass Arboretum. One side of the tower holds the tower's entrance. The other seven sides are dominated by luminescent, stained-glass windows. These windows depict colorful, ever-shifting fractals that periodically coalesce into scenes from worlds throughout the multiverse. Each window is a planar portal to the world currently visible in the window. Usually these images are random, but when someone in the multiverse draws the Skull card from a *Deck of Many Things*, one of the windows shows a scene depicting the unfortunate individual and opens a portal to that individual's location.

At the center of Death's Aperture is a bottomless well that churns with dark smoke. When a grim champion wishes to punish a trespasser or an incompetent minion, they throw the unfortunate creature down this well, and it is never seen again.

Mothwing Grove

Mothwing Grove is an eerily quiet forest of stout trees shrouded in mist. The scent of rain hangs

heavy in the grove, but rain never actually falls here, and the air is supernaturally stagnant.

In addition to the demiplane's standard features, Mothwing Grove has the following feature:

Consuming Emptiness. Whenever a creature that isn't Undead finishes a long rest within the Mothwing Grove, that creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by 5. This reduction lasts until ended by the *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic. If this effect reduces the creature to 0 hit points, it dies.

The grove gets its name from the unusual **will-o'-wisps** that inhabit it. These will-o'-wisps—thought to spawn from the lonely and fractured souls of the grove's other Undead inhabitants—adopt the shapes of moths or butterflies, and flitter through the thick mist. This grove is also home to flocks of **harrow hawks** (see chapter 21). Many of these hawks are in the Grim Harrow's employ, serving as spies and scouts for hunts.

Magtubo. At the center of Mothwing Grove stands a wide banyan tree swaddled in the pale vines of a strangler fig. This tree is an ancient entity named Magtubo. (Use the **treant** stat block for Magtubo, but its type is Undead instead of Plant.) Magtubo has lived in the Gardens of Decay since before the Grim Harrow came; it remembers the faerie forest that used to be here, which it once tended. If anyone asks, Magtubo tells the story of the Grim Harrow's arrival and slaughter of the Fey that dwelled here, but otherwise the tree remains silent, avoiding the notice of the grim champions.

When not leading a hunting party, Jyn Corvis, the **Grim Champion of Desolation** (this stat block appears later in this chapter), can usually be found lounging among Magtubo's roots, planning the Grim Harrow's next moves.

Scarlet Mire

Scarlet Mire is a putrid swamp soaked in unspeakable violence. It was here that the blink dogs that dwelled within the Gardens of Delight were slaughtered, and where they rose again as Undead **harrow hounds** (this stat block appears later in this chapter). Rancid red sludge bathes the land, and the cloying, metallic taste of blood suffuses the air.

In addition to the demiplane's standard features, Scarlet Mire has the following feature:

Blood-Soaked. Scarlet Mire is sodden with gore, rendering it difficult terrain. Additionally, creatures in Scarlet Mire that aren't Undead have disadvantage on initiative rolls.

The red mud and boggy terrain of Scarlet Mire are caused by the glut of decaying bodies beneath the marsh's surface. **Crawling claws** skitter through the marsh, grasping at any who pass through. Scarlet Mire is also inhabited by roving bands of **wights**.

The Rowena. The jagged prow of a half-sunken galleon juts from the heart of the marsh. Scrawled lettering on the ship's side reveals its name as the *Rowena*. Wynemar Brack, the **Grim Champion of Bloodshed** (this stat block appears later in this chapter) captured this ship on a hunt centuries ago and hoped to sail it through the Astral Sea, escaping the demiplane's pull, but the demiplane's magic brought the entire ship back instead. Wynemar holds court here, attended by her first mate, a **death knight** named Lord Gallien, along with other lieutenants and lesser Undead.

Withered Vineyard

Withered Vineyard is a place of plague and illness. Rows of crops stand blight-gorged and decayed. The few fruits that spawn from the shriveled plants are gray and wrinkled, breaking open to reveal maggots infesting their cores.

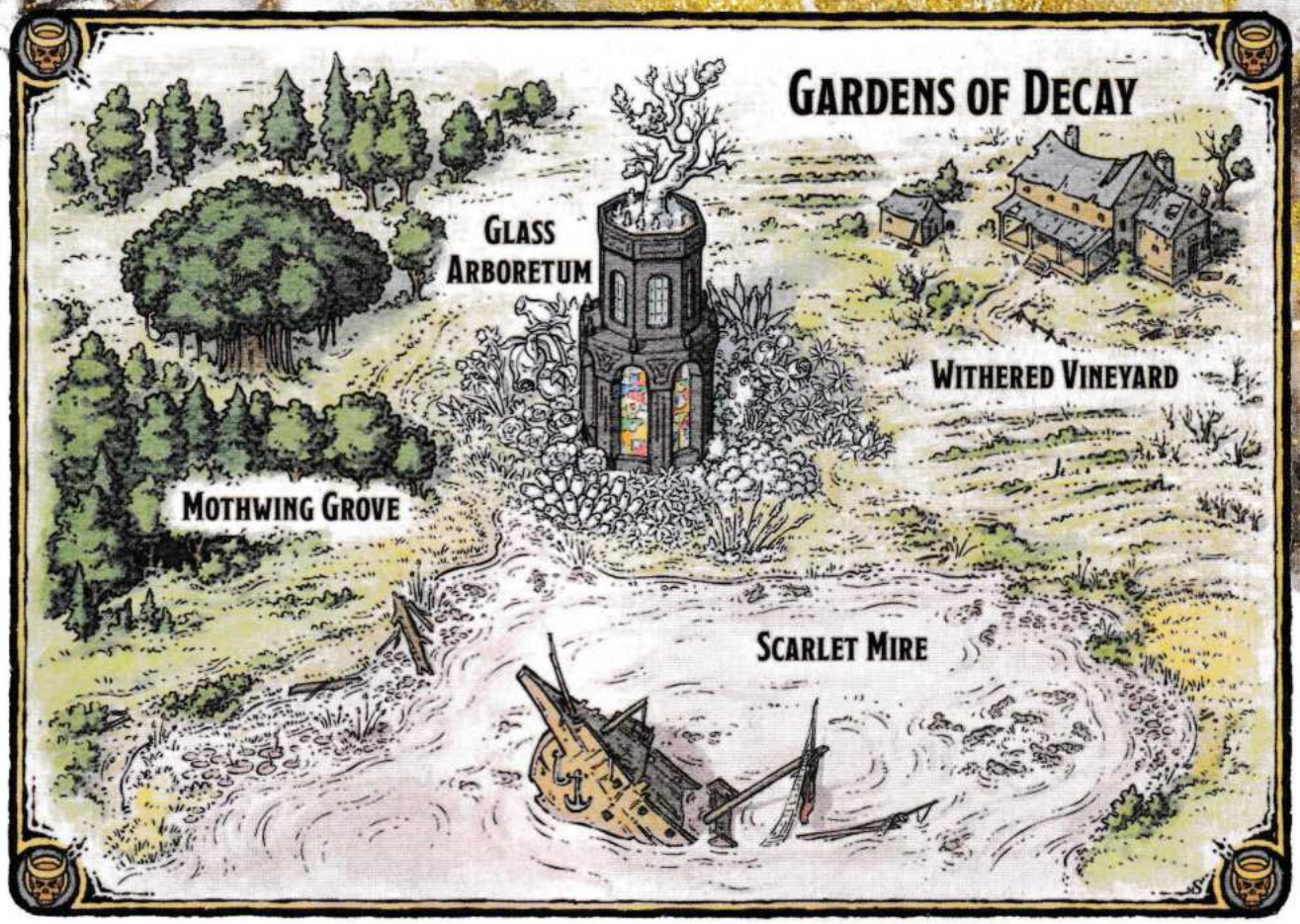
In addition to the demiplane's standard features, Withered Vineyard has the following feature:

Sickly Air. The Withered Vineyard is contaminated with toxic spores. A creature that spends 1 minute in the vineyard must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have the poisoned condition for 24 hours. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to the vineyard's toxic spores for 24 hours.

Hungry insect swarms ravage this section of the demiplane. Undead that inhabit the Withered Vineyard for extended periods of time sometimes transform into hulking masses of rotting foliage (use the **vine blight** stat block, but these creatures' type is Undead instead of Plant).

House of Rot. A ramshackle farmhouse known as the House of Rot stands atop a squat hill in the center of Withered Vineyard. Sickly blue paint peels off the farmhouse's moldering wood walls, and the holes in its slate roof are knitted over with cobwebs. Inside, the bones of Humanoids litter the floor, picked clean by worms.

The House of Rot serves as the home of Aleron, the **Grim Champion of Pestilence** (this stat block appears later in this chapter). Twin **banshees** named Alegara and Melisma watch over the house in Aleron's absence. They welcome visitors, sizing them up as potential meals while offering trays of rotting appetizers and cups of moldy tea.



MAP 19.1: GARDENS OF DECAY

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Grim Harrow includes both weak and powerful Undead, and it serves as an antagonist organization for adventurers of every level. The threat it poses turns any *Deck of Many Things* into a ticking time bomb. The following are examples of ways the hunt might come for characters:

Countdown. Laurel, a young woman who recently inherited her father's merchant wagon, finds a *Deck of Many Things* among the wagon's contents. She travels the roads trying to sell her father's goods, ignorant of the dangers the deck attracts. Jared, a knight of the Solar Bastion (see chapter 10), enlists the characters to find Laurel before the Grim Harrow does. When the adventurers reach her, however, they learn she has sold the deck, and a harrowing hunt has already begun.

Oddlewin in Danger. Oddlewin is a fortune teller in Seelie Market (see chapter 14). He is being hunted by a **revenant** and fled the market to avoid endangering his friends there. He enlists the characters to protect him, offering magical trinkets and the opportunity to draw from his *Deck of Many Things*. But when the Grim Harrow begins to close in, Oddlewin hides the deck among the characters' belongings and flees, sending the harrowing hunt in pursuit of the characters.

Redemption. Asteria (see chapter 22) believes the Grim Champion of Desolation might be someone she knew from her youth, and if she's right, she's certain that person can be returned to the path of good. Asteria asks the adventurers to infiltrate the Gardens of Decay to learn that champion's true identity. If the champion is who Asteria suspects, Asteria wants the characters to bring the champion out of the garden to a place where she can confront the champion.

Unwitting Pawns. The characters are recruited to search for a *Deck of Many Things* by a wealthy patron, Lord Verin Oakley, who claims descent from a famous knight who once owned this deck. Verin insists he has an ancestral claim to it, and he is willing to pay handsomely. Verin sends the characters on all manner of adventures, always looking for any sign of the deck. But when they finally locate it and return it to him, they learn Verin is an agent of the Grim Harrow and hopes to attain vampirism or another form of immortality as a reward for handing over the deck.

MIKE SCHLEY

The Grim Champions

The Grim Harrow is led by three powerful entities with the title of grim champion. Each champion embodies a terrible facet of death. Jyn Corvis, Grim Champion of Desolation, is the oldest and most powerful of the three and embodies all-consuming nothingness. She led the Grim Harrow to the Gardens of Delight long ago and is the nominal leader of all the Undead in the demiplane. The other two champions—Wynemar Brack, Grim Champion of Bloodshed, and Aleron, Grim Champion of Pestilence—rival Jyn for power and together can oppose her. The fact that the three champions rarely agree on anything is a major check on the group's power. Instead of the Grim Harrow acting as a unified force, each of the three champions usually pursues their own interests, seldom cooperating or sharing intelligence or resources.

Grim Champion of Bloodshed

Wynemar Brack was once a farmer, but mercenaries in a local war razed her fields and sacked her village. In desperation, she yielded to the clever patter of a traveling fortune teller and drew from a *Deck of Many Things*. The avatar of death slew her in a flash. That was many centuries ago, and Wynemar is now a powerful and bloodthirsty Undead commander of the Grim Harrow.

Wreathed in searing fire, Wynemar embodies the havoc of violence and war. She rides a flaming steed that uses the **nightmare** stat block but is an Undead instead of a Fiend.

Jyn Corvis may have been the first person to draw the Skull card from the deck.

Grim Champion of Desolation

Jyn Corvis, a former adventurer, might have been the first person to draw the Skull card from a *Deck of Many Things* and be slain by the avatar of death. Even Jyn doesn't know for sure, as that was so long ago that she's forgotten almost everything about her former life. Jyn's existence over so many centuries has left her in tortured misery, and now nihilism is all that drives her. More than any other member of the Grim Harrow, Jyn is desperate to destroy the deck and end her painful existence. If she could, she'd take the entire multiverse with her.

The Grim Champion of Desolation rides a malevolent draconic beast with pale, leathery wings and emaciated skin; this mount uses the **wyvern** stat block, but it is an Undead instead of a Dragon. An eerie, hollow silence heralds the champion's arrival.

Grim Champion of Pestilence

Aleron was once a tiefling adventurer, but unlike so many victims of the *Deck of Many Things*, he never drew the Skull card. Instead, when one of his allies drew the card and faced the avatar of death, Aleron came to his ally's aid. A second avatar of death appeared, and Aleron was slain; soon after, his Undead corpse crawled from Withered Vineyard, tainted with plague. Aleron resents his fellow Undead in the Grim Harrow, considering himself better than all of them and unjustly condemned to the Gardens of Decay for an act of altruism.

Though the weakest of the Harrow's three leaders, the Grim Champion of Pestilence is nonetheless a fearsome entity of sickness and blight. A swarm of insects surrounds him in a mockery of a halo, and debilitating plagues flow from his fingertips. Aleron rides a **warhorse skeleton** with flies buzzing in its gaping eye sockets.

I don't fear death—haven't for a while, in fact. It's a blessed consequence of living such a long and adventurous life. But I fear the Grim Harrow's leaders.

DOMENICO CAVA

Well, that's not quite correct, either. Rather, I fear the sheer destruction those three grim champions leave in their wake. Their lives might be condemned to undeath and annihilation, but then they stampede across the multiverse, violently killing so many innocents whose stories have yet to be written. I want to empathize with them; I've tried to put myself in their places and understand their motives. But I can't. They're simply abhorrent.

WYNEMAR BRACK

Grim Champion of Bloodshed

Medium Undead, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 18 (plate armor)
Hit Points 280 (33d8 + 132)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +12, Dex +7, Con +10
Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +11, Perception +9
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the champion fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The champion makes four Blazing Morningstar attacks. It can replace one of these attacks with Blade Storm, if available.

Blazing Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) fire damage.

Blade Storm (Recharge 5–6). The champion conjures a churning storm of spectral blades that fills a 20-foot cube centered on a point it can see within 120 feet of itself. The storm lasts until the start of the champion's next turn. While the storm is active, the area of the storm is difficult terrain. Whenever a creature enters the storm for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) slashing damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Legendary Actions

The champion can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The champion regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Furious Pursuit. The champion moves up to its speed or commands its mount to move up to its speed. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

Induce Violence. The champion targets one creature it can see within 60 feet of itself. The target must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or immediately make one melee weapon attack against another creature of the champion's choice that is within the target's reach. If no creature is within the target's reach or if the target has the incapacitated condition, the target instead takes 11 (2d10) psychic damage.

Menace (Costs 2 Actions). The champion chooses any number of creatures it can see within 30 feet of itself. Each target must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or have the frightened condition until the end of its next turn.

DOMENICO CAVA

I remember my first encounter with this champion. All of a sudden, everything around me went painfully silent. The ringing of blades, the rustle of clothing, the hum of magic—all gone. It was like I was stuck, observing the world through a frosted pane of glass.

We fought. I survived. I couldn't speak for days afterward.

JVN CORVIS

Grim Champion of Desolation

Medium Undead, Lawful Evil

Armor Class 18 (studded leather armor)
Hit Points 416 (49d8 + 196)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	23 (+6)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Con +12, Wis +13
Skills Deception +12, Insight +13, Perception +13, Stealth +14
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +8

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the champion fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The champion makes two Leeching Blade attacks and uses Hollow Void.

Leeching Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 33 (6d10) cold damage, and the champion regains 10 hit points.

Hollow Void. The champion summons a hungering rift around a creature it can see within 120 feet of itself. The creature must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 49 (11d8) force damage and has the stunned condition until the start of the champion's next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage only. If a creature is reduced to 0 hit points by this effect, the creature dies, and its body crumbles to dust.

Bonus Actions

Step into Nothing (Recharge 4–6). The champion, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, has the invisible condition and teleports to an unoccupied space it can see within 30 feet of itself. The champion remains invisible until the start of its next turn or immediately after it deals damage.

Legendary Actions

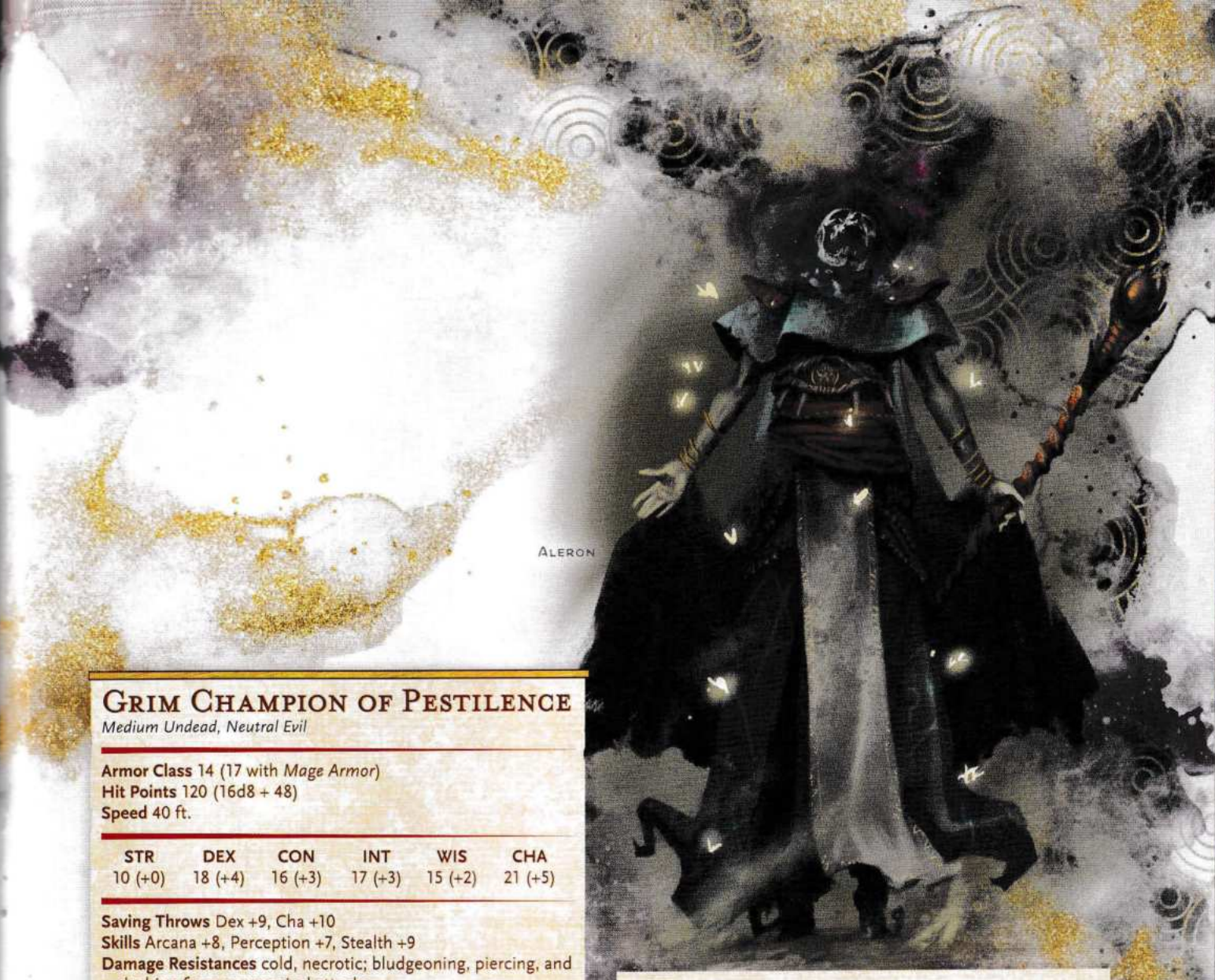
The champion can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The champion regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Crush. The champion unleashes a burst of crushing force on a creature it can see within 30 feet of itself. The creature must succeed on a DC 22 Strength saving throw or take 14 (4d6) force damage and have the prone condition.

Fearsome Pursuit. The champion moves up to its speed or commands its mount to move up to its speed. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

Nullify (Costs 2 Actions). The champion emits a magic wave in a 60-foot cone. Every spell of 5th level or lower ends on creatures and objects of the champion's choice in that area.

DOMENICO CAVA



ALERON

Grim Champion of Pestilence

Medium Undead, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 14 (17 with *Mage Armor*)
Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Cha +10
Skills Arcana +8, Perception +7, Stealth +9
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Halo of Pestilence. The champion is surrounded by an aura of deadly magic that takes the form of a host of glowing white insects. Each creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of the champion must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or have the incapacitated condition until the start of its next turn, as the insects ravage its body.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the champion fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The champion makes two Blight Staff attacks, two Plague Bolt attacks, or one of each.

Blight Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage.

Plague Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +10 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) poison damage, and the target has the poisoned condition until the start of the champion's next turn.

Spellcasting. The champion casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18):

At will: *Detect Magic*, *Mage Armor* (self only)
2/day each: *Blight*, *Blindness/Deafness*
1/day each: *Cloudkill*, *Contagion*

Legendary Actions

The champion can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The champion regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Attack. The champion makes one Blight Staff or Plague Bolt attack.
Furious Pursuit. The champion moves up to its speed or commands its mount to move up to its speed. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.
Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The champion uses Spellcasting.

DOMENICO CAVA

Harrow Hound

When the Grim Harrow first found the faerie realm known as the Gardens of Delight, that place was home to a large population of blink dogs. The Undead invaders slaughtered the blink dogs and settled in the gardens, transforming the demiplane forever. In time, the necrotic magic of the Grim Harrow animated the corpses of the blink dogs as the first harrow hounds.

The Grim Harrow employs harrow hounds as trackers and companions. Harrow hounds are especially useful when investigating possible sightings of a *Deck of Many Things*. If a harrow hound catches the scent of its prey, it never loses it, even if the hound and its fellow hunters return to the Gardens of Decay with the hunt incomplete. Powerful Undead, such as vampires and death knights, might be accompanied by packs of harrow hounds.

Harrow Hound

Medium Undead, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	8 (–1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances necrotic, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Blink Dog, understands Sylvan but can't speak it
Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Pack Tactics. The hound has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the hound's allies is within 5 feet of the target and the ally doesn't have the incapacitated condition.

Supernatural Tracker. The hound knows the distance to and direction of any creature that has come within 30 feet of it, even if that creature is on a different plane of existence. If the creature being tracked by the hound dies, the hound knows.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or have the prone condition.

Bonus Actions

Shadow Step (Recharge 4–6). The hound magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 40 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

CLAUDIO POZAS

CHAPTER 20

FLAMES

THE FOLLOWING PAGES DETAIL THREE UNIQUE Fiends designed to be recurring adversaries for your campaign. Each entry includes a description and details about the Fiend's background, suggestions for ways to use this adversary in your campaign, and its stat block. In addition, each Fiend is accompanied by new rules elements that you can use on their own or in tandem with the Fiend.

A character who draws the Flames card from a *Deck of Many Things* attracts the ire of a powerful Fiend. The three malevolent beings described in this chapter can each fill that role, but you can incorporate these fearsome foes into your campaign in other ways. Characters might stumble across evidence of heinous deeds performed by one of these monsters or its servants, or you could make opposing one of these Fiends the backbone of an entire campaign. Although these creatures span a wide level range and should be usable in most campaigns, you can always adjust these stat blocks to make the Fiends more suitable challenges for your characters. The possibilities are as endless as the layers of the Abyss.

Aurnozci, the Caged Worm

The demon lord Aurnozci is a wormlike horror of fiery flesh and toxic seepage. In its present form, Aurnozci can't leave Xulregg, the Abyssal layer that's both its fiefdom and its prison. It lairs within a grotesque hive dangling from a mountain-size tree of tar and flame called Gorewood.

Aurnozci relies on demonic proxies and mortal worshipers to enact its will beyond the Abyss. The exact nature of the curse that binds Aurnozci to Xulregg is its cult's most closely guarded secret, fully known only to the faith's enigmatic leader, a masked **archmage** called the Eye of Aurnozci.

Aurnozci's followers believe the demon lord's imprisonment is coming to an end, and soon the Caged Worm will shed its current form and transform into an even more powerful shape. Once it attains this new form, Aurnozci can escape Xulregg and wreak havoc across the multiverse. To accelerate this terrible transformation, cultists hunt down mortal souls for violent ritual sacrifice to their god.

HARRY CONWAY

Using Aurnozci in a Game

Aurnozci's cult targets mortals to use as sacrifices for the demon lord. The cult's hordes of minions travel throughout the Material Plane to bedevil and capture less powerful creatures and enemies of the cult. Lower-level characters could earn the cult's ire by stepping on the wrong toes during their early adventures, such as by attacking a sect of the cult.

The cult's leader, the Eye of Aurnozci, focuses on powerful mortals or enemies of the cult. High-level characters with a record of heroic deeds can easily fall into this category. The Eye of Aurnozci might also take interest in a mortal who draws the Flames card from a *Deck of Many Things*—a tantalizing opportunity for the cult to make good on the card's dire prophecy.

Once a character is targeted by the cult of Aurnozci, fiendish assassins assail the party. If

Aurnozci within the Firehive

the Caged Worm and its followers are the primary antagonists in your campaign, these attacks could happen as frequently as every session; otherwise, space them out every few sessions. At first, the foes might be lesser demons like **manes** or **dretches**, or Humanoid **cultists** of Aurnozci. As the characters level up, the enemies gradually increase in strength. Between fights, the characters can slowly unravel details of the cult pursuing them. By the time the characters learn they must travel to the Abyss to stop the cult's aggression, they might be regularly encountering throngs of **glabrezus**, **nalfeshnees**, or other powerful demons.

The party's journey to Xulregg and infiltration of Gorewood are adventures in themselves. A map of Gorewood and an overview of the locations within this Abyssal realm appear later in this chapter.

Depending on your players' actions, the characters might resolve their final confrontation with Aurnozci's cult by diplomacy or by force. The safest way to escape the cult is to confront the Eye of Aurnozci and persuade this shadowy villain to call off the attacks. Alternatively, a strong enough party might take the fight to Aurnozci in its hive and attempt to slay the demon lord once and for all.

Roleplaying Aurnozci

Aurnozci is a being of mindless destruction, and the Caged Worm has few dealings with mortals that don't end in consumption. Periodically, the Eye of Aurnozci communes with their horrifying master or leads a ceremony of propitiation in the Firehive. In combat, Aurnozci screeches horribly and attacks any intruders in sight with reckless abandon.

Aurnozci's Lair

Aurnozci's lair is a layer of the Abyss called Xulregg. See below for details about this realm.

The challenge rating of Aurnozci is 23 (50,000 XP) when it's encountered in its lair.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Aurnozci can take one of the following lair actions; Aurnozci can't take the same lair action two rounds in a row:

Cocoon. Aurnozci targets one Medium or smaller creature it can see within 60 feet of itself and encases the creature in a constricting cocoon. The target must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or have the restrained condition for 1 minute. A target that starts its turn restrained in this way takes 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage. A creature can use its action to try to tear apart the cocoon, ending the cocoon's effect with a successful DC 23 Strength (Athletics) check.

BUD COOK

Insect Swarm. Aurnozci creates a 30-foot-radius sphere of stinging wasps centered on a point within 300 feet of itself. The sphere spreads around corners. The sphere remains for 10 minutes or until Aurnozci uses this lair action again. The sphere's area is heavily obscured and is difficult terrain. When the sphere appears, each creature in it must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) piercing damage and 16 (3d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature must also make this saving throw when it enters the sphere's area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there.

Regional Effects

Xulregg is an oppressively muggy realm known for the following regional effects:

Boiling Water. Bodies of water on Xulregg perpetually boil, and even bottled liquids steam when exposed to the layer's atmosphere. Being immersed in water there doesn't confer resistance to fire damage, and a creature that starts its turn in water takes 7 (2d6) fire damage. A creature that imbibes a liquid (such as a potion) takes 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Fast Metamorphosis. On Xulregg, eggs, larvae, and pupae all develop and metamorphose at ten times their usual rate, regardless of sustenance or any other growing conditions.

If Aurnozci dies, these effects fade over the course of 1d10 days.

Cultists of Aurnozci

Aurnozci grants its cultists the following trait:

Burning Corpse. When the creature dies, its body is reduced to a pile of smoldering embers in the space where it fell. The ashes take 1 minute to cool. Until then, a creature takes 3 (1d6) fire damage when it enters the ashes' space for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there.

Xulregg

The Abyssal layer of Xulregg is a sweltering forest of massive trees, rotting undergrowth, and boiling marshes.

Locations in Xulregg

The following locations are keyed to map 20.1.

Gorewood. The center of Xulregg is Gorewood, a massive gum tree in an eternal state of smoldering decay. Gorewood's trunk is as large as any mountain on the Material Plane, and its winding branches are as broad and meandering as river deltas. Thousands of chambers, tunnels, and halls—all claimed by the cult of Aurnozci—riddle the tree's rotten interior.

Aurnozci

Gargantuan Fiend (Demon), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 370 (20d20 + 160)
Speed 50 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	20 (+5)	26 (+8)	6 (–2)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +15, Con +15
Damage Resistances cold, lightning
Damage Immunities acid, fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 22 (41,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

Heat Regeneration. If the temperature around it is 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, Aurnozci regains 15 hit points at the start of its turn. If it takes cold or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn. Aurnozci dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Aurnozci fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Aurnozci has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Aurnozci makes one Bite attack and two Tail attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (2d12 + 8) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) fire damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Mucus Spray (Recharge 5–6). Aurnozci sprays mucus in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that cone must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

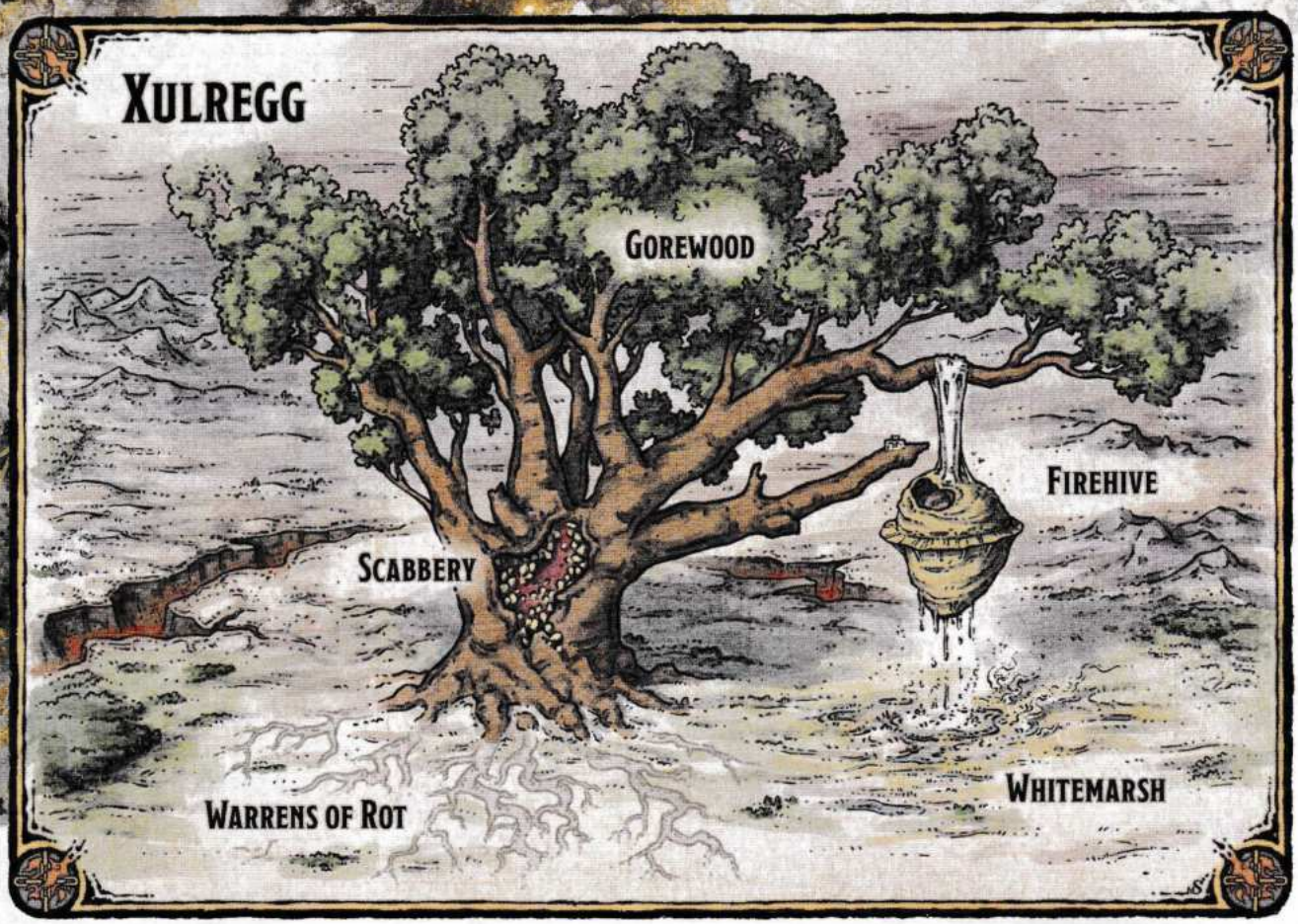
Spellcasting. Aurnozci casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 20):

At will: *Detect Magic*, *Heat Metal* (7th-level version)
2/day each: *Darkness*, *Dispel Magic*, *Hold Person*

Legendary Actions

Aurnozci can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Aurnozci regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. Aurnozci moves up to its speed.
Tail. Aurnozci makes one Tail attack.
Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). Aurnozci uses Spellcasting.
Conflagration (Costs 2 Actions). Flames momentarily surround Aurnozci. Each creature within 15 feet of Aurnozci must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



MAP 20.1: XULREGG

Huge sections of the tree crackle and glow with ancient embers, though Gorewood grows faster than any fire can destroy it. Wet, sticky tar seeps from Gorewood's bark, fueling the tree's eon-spanning burn but also keeping the fire in check.

Firehive. Aurnozci's nest hangs from one of Gorewood's strongest, knobbiest branches, secured by a hundred-foot-thick cord of Aurnozci's iron-hard silk. The nest itself, called the Firehive, resembles a gargantuan wasp nest with an open top. Aurnozci's power causes the Firehive to throb like a beating heart, and the nest's surface is hot to the touch.

Halfway up the Firehive, a ramshackle platform of regurgitated bones encircles the nest. From here, demonic pilgrims and priests of Aurnozci peer through cracks in the nest's wall to gaze upon their dread lord. A broken Gorewood limb overlooks the opening at the top of the nest. Aurnozci's servants throw sacrifices to it from this overlook, and the Eye of Aurnozci conducts profane rituals atop a dais on the tree limb's edge.

Scabbery. When Aurnozci's minions are destroyed on the Material Plane, their souls slip through cracks in the multiverse and drip to Xulregg to feed Gorewood's thirsty roots. After a time, Gorewood rebirths the recycled demons, excreting each into its own chrysalis-like pod made from the tree's fleshy inner wood. The massive hollow chamber in Gorewood from which these chrysalises develop, bulge, and pop is called the Scabbery. Not simply a disgusting moniker, the Scabbery's name is also a reference to the way that demons reborn here emerge harder, stronger, and crueler than before.

Warrens of Rot. The endless miles of sodden tunnels and caves beneath Gorewood are called the Warrens of Rot. Each passage was once a tentacular root that at some point caught fire, burned away, and became a hollow charcoal tube. Intruders caught in Aurnozci's realm are held in the Warrens of Rot as future sacrifices to the Caged Worm. Strange, fiendish beasts lurk in the Warrens' unexplored corners, so even powerful demons don't linger in these tunnels.

Whitemarsh. Vile offal drips from the bottom of the Firehive and collects on the ground below. This boggy wetland has become a fertile breeding ground called Whitemarsh: a primordial soup that gives rise to all manner of monsters. The weakest specimens are gobbled up by hungry demons fresh from the Scabbery. Sometimes, powerful behemoths with freakish powers emerge from Whitemarsh. Most such beings flee Xulregg or are captured and sacrificed to Aurnozci, though a few have been allowed to live and serve the Caged Worm as honored guardians.

MIKE SCHLEY

Hulgaz the Tempter

Hulgaz is a devil who hails from the stinking swamps of Minauros, the third layer of the Nine Hells. The self-styled Tempter corrupts mortals' souls by offering them tantalizing but ruinous boons. To do so, she directs her entourage of loyal succubi and incubi to the Material Plane in search of vulnerable mortals. When they find a particularly pitiful soul, Hulgaz might visit herself, offering even greater "gifts" to her victims.

As befits a duchess from boggy Minauros, Hulgaz appears regal yet perpetually sodden, her matted hair tangled with her soggy garments. For all her majesty, Hulgaz's fiendish nature is apparent in her monstrous features: bestial claws, glossy black eyes, and a snakelike tail tipped with a poisonous spike. On the rare occasion when her social graces fail to achieve the desired result, Hulgaz turns her natural weapons on her victims.

Hulgaz

Large Fiend (Devil), Lawful Evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 190 (20d10 + 80)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Wis +7, Cha +10
Skills Deception +10, Insight +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +10
Damage Resistances acid, cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Abyssal, Common, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Hulgaz fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Hulgaz has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Hulgaz makes two Claw attacks and one Intoxicating Sting attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Intoxicating Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or have the charmed condition until the start of Hulgaz's next turn.

Brimstone Vapor (Recharge 5–6). Hulgaz exhales a 30-foot cone of noxious, scorching-hot vapor. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or have the poisoned condition for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, a creature takes 31 (7d8) fire damage at the start of each of its turns and has disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws. A target can repeat the Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Spellcasting. Hulgaz casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 18):

At will: *Charm Person*
2/day each: *Dispel Magic*, *Fog Cloud*
1/day: *Teleport*

Legendary Actions

Hulgaz can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Hulgaz regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Attack. Hulgaz makes one Claw attack.
Charm. Hulgaz uses Spellcasting to cast *Charm Person*.
Curdle Heart (Costs 2 Actions). Hulgaz sours the good feelings of her charmed victims. She chooses any number of creatures she can see who are charmed by her. Each target takes 17 (5d6) psychic damage as the charmed condition applied by Hulgaz ends on it.

BRYNN METHENEY

HULGAZ'S INFERNAL GIFTS COME WITH UNEXPECTED CONSEQUENCES.

USING HULGAZ IN A GAME

Hulgaz is a compelling antagonist for groups that enjoy roleplaying and social encounters, especially if they might enjoy the prospect of making a deal with a devil.

Though her stat block is provided in the case of a fight, Hulgaz is best used as a recurring villain in roleplaying encounters. Her primary means of corrupting mortals is by offering them tantalizing boons called infernal blessings.

When a character attracts the attention of Hulgaz, she or her servants confront the character and offer a boon. But any boon on offer is fated to make the recipient miserable. Even those who choose to not take part in Hulgaz's schemes eventually suffer at her hands.

Examples of infernal blessings Hulgaz can offer characters are provided below, followed by sample encounters that feature Hulgaz or her minions.

ROLEPLAYING HULGAZ

Hulgaz is witty, garrulous, and patient all at once. She speaks calmly in a low voice, and her movements are graceful and purposeful. Each shrug of her shoulders or waggle of her finger is a well-rehearsed ploy, a gesture she has weaponized to put her targets off guard.

Hulgaz is a charmer in both the common and magical sense. She effortlessly ingratiates herself, instinctively deducing the most effective tack to take in any conversation. This might mean lending a sympathetic ear to a weepy-eyed supplicant one moment, then seconds later offering hearty laughter to a jokester's poor jape.

Whatever her outward demeanor, any perceived kindness Hulgaz offers is strictly a means to her wicked agenda: the corruption of mortal souls. If she has a tell, it is her long, snakelike tail. In the midst of a conversation with an especially tantalizing victim-to-be, Hulgaz can't help but whip her tail back and forth with excitement.

Selfless heroes and true martyrs pique Hulgaz's interest because she loves the challenge of twisting and defiling the souls of such noble beings. She responds to unwavering do-gooders by redoubling her efforts to corrupt them.

INFERNAL BLESSINGS

Here are several blessings Hulgaz can bestow on willing Humanoids. Other Fiends, particularly archdevils, might bestow such blessings as well, and you can create additional blessings Hulgaz might bestow. Unlike most blessings, infernal blessings impose both desirable and detrimental effects on the user. Casting the *Remove Curse* spell on the subject of an infernal blessing ends the blessing's effects, including its consequences.

The description of each blessing addresses its user. Each blessing's detrimental effect should be a surprise to the blessing's user when it is revealed some time after the infernal blessing is gained.

BLESSING OF BLOODY MIGHT

Supernatural Gift (Blessing)

Your Strength score increases by 2, to a maximum of 22.

Consequence. The character is cursed with werewolf lycanthropy (see the *Monster Manual*) until the blessing ends on them. On nights when the moon is full, the cursed character flies into a rage that lasts until dawn; while in this state, the character becomes an NPC under the DM's control.

BLESSING OF LONELY GENIUS

Supernatural Gift (Blessing)

Your Intelligence score increases by 2, to a maximum of 22.

Consequence. The character's intellect rubs old friends the wrong way. Three NPCs of the DM's choice become indifferent or hostile toward the character, and the character automatically fails any Charisma check made to improve their attitudes.

Blessing of Unearned Riches

Supernatural Gift (Blessing)

The next time you search among or retrieve something from your belongings, you find an unmarked pouch containing five 1,000 gp gemstones.

Consequence. The character's new fortune garners unwanted attention from a guild of violent mercenaries, who claim to have been robbed of exactly 5,000 gp worth of gems the same day as the character found the windfall. Every night for the next 7 days, the character is attacked by 1d4 neutral evil **veterans**. When the attacks end, so does this blessing.

Encounters with Hulgaz

Hulgaz makes a good adversary for players who especially enjoy roleplaying. If your players prefer to talk to enemies they encounter rather than fight them, consider using Hulgaz in your campaign.

You can run the following encounters to introduce Hulgaz to the party. These encounters are designed to occur in the order presented over the course of several game sessions, as Hulgaz first probes the characters to test their virtue, then tries to tempt them, and finally confronts them. At the end of each encounter, Hulgaz offers the characters one or more infernal blessings. Most encounters with Hulgaz are roleplaying-focused, and the level of the characters isn't especially important, but a final confrontation with the Tempter should wait until your heroes are 11th or 12th level (depending on how many characters are in your group).

Deceptive Knight

While traveling through a remote area, the party comes across a knight beset by three bandits. The knight appears wounded. In fact, the knight and the bandits are four **succubi** in magical disguise, testing the party's integrity on behalf of Hulgaz. The knight cries out for help, apparently assailed by the bandits.

How the succubi interact with the characters depends on how the characters react to this situation:

The Party Helps. If the party intervenes, the knight thanks the characters for their courage and offers them a reward.

The Party Doesn't Engage. If the party does nothing, the laughing bandits offer the complicit party a parting favor pilfered from the defeated knight.

The Party Catches the Lie. If the party sees through the ruse, the succubi reveal their true forms and applaud the characters' perceptiveness with a reward.

In every case, a member of the party is offered a choice between two infernal blessings. The succubi hint that this gift is on behalf of their mistress, Hulgaz, but they don't divulge any further details. Whether or not a character accepts the offer, the succubi depart once the exchange is over.

Time of Need

During an especially harrowing fight, **Hulgaz** appears to the party. She teleports to the most hard-pressed character and casually offers to help in the battle. All she asks in return is for the character to accept an infernal blessing from her. If the character rejects her offer, Hulgaz "tsks" in disappointment, then summons two **succubi** to attack the party before teleporting away.

Crossroads Confrontation

Hulgaz makes her final appearance to the party long after their previous meeting. This encounter takes place at a suitably dramatic location, such as a deserted rural crossroads, when the characters believe themselves to be free of Hulgaz.

Hulgaz offers them one last deal. She produces a handful of baubles that represent her infernal blessings, one for each member of the party. Hulgaz offers the characters these gifts as tokens of her esteem. To emphasize her respect for the party, she has tailored the charms to suit each character's stated goals or aspirations.

As before, the charms are designed to bring the characters fortune and woe in equal measure. This time, Hulgaz doesn't take no for an answer. If the characters refuse to take the infernal charms, Hulgaz shakes her head ruefully. She says that if she can't convince the characters to accept the Nine Hells' invitations, she'll have to send them there herself. **Hulgaz** then launches into a frenzied assault, attacking with reckless abandon.

Malaxxix the Shackler

Legends describe the dread being Malaxxix as the child of one of the night hags who created the first yugoloths. Malaxxix is often lumped in with such Fiends, perhaps because it too has a grand intellect and self-centered agenda.

Malaxxix's machinations are many, but it is most infamous for crafting cursed armaments and distributing them throughout the multiverse in the hope that they'll be found by mortals who are desperate for power and ripe for corruption.

Malaxxix seeks the *Books of Keeping*: ancient tomes that contain the true names of all yugoloths. To this end, it patrols the vilest swaths of the

multiverse from atop its unholy vehicle, the Unborn Palanquin. This shambling collective is made up of thousands of mezzoloths devoted to their liege, who roams the Lower Planes as a tyrannical marauder.

Using Malaxxix in a Game

Malaxxix is a powerful and violent brute, an ideal enemy for a deadly high-level combat encounter anywhere in the multiverse. The best way to presage such a confrontation is to present the party with one or more of Malaxxix's custom-made cursed items, exposing characters to the curse of Malaxxix. Sample cursed items and rules for the curse of Malaxxix are included below.

Malaxxix's creations appear at fortuitous times. A character might find one days after some great misfortune, such as after wronging a powerful hag or drawing the Flames card from a *Deck of Many Things*. Of course, you can also place such a cursed item in your next dungeon or among an otherwise unremarkable treasure hoard.

Once a character attunes to one of Malaxxix's cursed items, that character becomes afflicted with the yugoloth's curse. Malaxxix can spy upon any creature so afflicted and can teleport to a cursed creature at will. Malaxxix typically reserves this attention for creatures it believes might advance its goal of locating the *Books of Keeping*.

It could be some time before Malaxxix presents itself to the party. Beforehand, Malaxxix is likely to craft additional cursed items for the party to find on their adventures, then watch in delight as the characters squirm under the weight of their unholy armaments. Only once Malaxxix has tired of the characters does it teleport to the characters' location, attempt to slay the buffoonish mortals, and reclaim the treasures.

Roleplaying Malaxxix

Malaxxix is a being of great cunning, terrible rage, and insatiable bloodlust who regards any opportunity to inflict misery on others as worthwhile. When Malaxxix deigns to speak with others, the fiend displays grandiloquent diction and a pompous demeanor—a stark contrast to the yugoloth's usual fury.

Malaxxix's Lair

The Unborn Palanquin—a monstrous, centipedal vehicle—serves as both Malaxxix's primary conveyance and the Fiend's lair.

Malaxxix can take lair actions (see below) while astride the palanquin. When encountered on the palanquin, Malaxxix's challenge rating is 19 (22,000 XP).

> Too many legs. Too loud. Makes my mind feel like it's melting.

The Unborn Palanquin

The Unborn Palanquin is a wormlike leviathan of screeching gears made up of hundreds of tireless mezzoloths. It is a unique vehicle and Gargantuan object with the following statistics:

Armor Class: 20
Hit Points: 250
Speed: 50 ft., burrow 30 ft.
Damage Immunities: poison, psychic

Only Malaxxix can pilot this vehicle. If Malaxxix is slain, the palanquin crumbles in seconds.

Lair Actions

In its lair on initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Malaxxix can take one of the following lair actions; Malaxxix can't take the same lair action two rounds in a row:

Reassemble. Malaxxix chooses either itself or the palanquin. The target gains 19 (3d12) temporary hit points.

Slam. Malaxxix commands the palanquin to slam the ground. Each creature within 15 feet of the palanquin must make a DC 20 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage and has the prone condition. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage only.

Surge. Malaxxix commands the palanquin to move up to its speed.

Regional Effects

The region around the Unborn Palanquin is warped by its presence, creating the following effects:

Cranial Discomfort. Creatures that spend more than 24 hours within 1 mile of the palanquin hear an incessant scraping sound in their minds.

Grinding Gears. Constructs within 1 mile of the palanquin move sluggishly. Constructs' speeds are halved, and they have disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws.

Swarming Insects. Insects and insectile Beasts within 1 mile of the palanquin become disoriented and aggressive, coalescing into unnatural swarms and attacking any creatures in sight.

If Malaxxix dies or the Unborn Palanquin is destroyed, these effects end immediately.

Malaxxix

Huge Fiend (Yugoloth), Neutral Evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 312 (25d12 + 150)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +12, Con +12
Skills Arcana +12, Athletics +12, Perception +11
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Abyssal, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Malaxxix fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Malaxxix has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Malaxxix makes two Forge Hammer or Whip attacks in any combination.

Forge Hammer. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft. or range 60/180 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the target can't take reactions until the end of Malaxxix's next turn. *Hit or Miss:* The hammer then magically returns to Malaxxix's hand.

Whip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage, and the target has the restrained condition for 1 minute. The restrained target can make a DC 20 Strength saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Only one creature can be restrained by the whip at a time.

Mezzoloth Vortex (Recharge 5–6). Malaxxix summons a vortex of whirling mezzoloths at a point it can see within 90 feet of itself. The vortex is a 30-foot-radius, 100-foot-high cylinder centered on that point. Each creature other than Malaxxix in that area must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 35 (10d6) force damage and has the restrained condition while within the cylinder. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and is pushed to the nearest unoccupied space outside the cylinder. The vortex lasts until the start of Malaxxix's next turn.

Legendary Actions

Malaxxix can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Malaxxix regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Fiendish Stride. Malaxxix moves up to its speed. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks. When Malaxxix moves within 5 feet of a creature during this movement, that creature takes 5 (1d10) lightning damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Attack (Costs 2 Actions). Malaxxix makes one Forge Hammer or Whip attack.

KATERINA LADON

Curse of Malaxxix

A creature that attunes to one of Malaxxix's cursed items becomes afflicted with the curse of Malaxxix. The curse enables Malaxxix to interact with the cursed creature in special ways:

Scrying. Malaxxix can cast the *Scrying* spell on the cursed creature without material components or a spell slot. Malaxxix doesn't need to be on the same plane of existence as the creature to use this ability, and the creature automatically fails the saving throw against the spell.

Teleport. As an action, Malaxxix can teleport, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, to an unoccupied space within 60 feet of the cursed creature, regardless of the creature's location in the multiverse.

The curse of Malaxxix lasts until ended with a *Remove Curse* spell, a *Greater Restoration* spell, or similar magic.

Cursed Magic Items

Here are two items Malaxxix crafted and placed on the Material Plane for unsuspecting mortals. In addition to their other properties, one or both of these items might bear the curse of Malaxxix (see above).

Blasted Goggles

Wondrous Item, Uncommon (Requires Attunement)

These tinker's goggles have 3 charges. As an action, you can expend 1 charge to shoot a beam of fiery light from the goggles at a creature you can see within 120 feet of yourself. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 fire damage. The goggles regain 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Cursed. The goggles are cursed, and becoming attuned to them extends the curse to you. You can't remove the goggles or end your attunement to them until you are targeted by a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic.

Whenever you use the goggles' fiery beam and roll a 1 on the d20 for the attack roll, the goggles expose you to a flash of violent bright light. As a result, you have the blinded condition for 24 hours.

I advise against judging anything by its appearance. However, if an item looks like it's screaming, I advise checking it for curses.

Shrieking Greaves

Wondrous Item, Rare (Requires Attunement)

Each of these black leg guards is decorated with a motif of monstrous skulls screaming in terror.

The greaves have 3 charges. While wearing these greaves, you can use a bonus action to expend 1 charge to increase your walking speed by 30 feet, and you have advantage on Dexterity saving throws. These effects last for 1 minute. The greaves regain 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Curse. The greaves are cursed, and becoming attuned to them extends the curse to you. You can't remove the greaves or end your attunement to them until you are targeted by a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic.

You have disadvantage on saving throws against the frightened condition. Whenever you start your turn frightened, the greaves release an ear-piercing scream. You and each creature within 10 feet of you must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Shrieking Greaves

SUZANNE HELMIGH

CHAPTER 21

TALONS

THIS CHAPTER PRESENTS MONSTERS INSPIRED by the *Deck of Many Things*, arranged in alphabetical order. For guidance on how to use a creature's stat block, consult the introduction of the *Monster Manual*. Some creatures have weapons with unusual damage types or spellcasting that functions in an atypical way. Such an exception is a special feature of a stat block and represents how the creature uses its weapon or casts its spells; the exception has no effect on how a weapon or spell functions for a different creature.

If a stat block contains the name of a class in parentheses under the creature's name, the creature is considered a member of that class for the purpose of meeting prerequisites for magic items.

Monsters in This Book

The Stat Blocks by Challenge Rating table sorts the creatures in this book by challenge rating.

Stat Blocks by Challenge Rating

CR	Stat Block	Creature Type	Chapter
1/4	Minotaur archaeologist	Humanoid	16
1/2	Aspirant of the Comet	Humanoid	12
1	Harrow hawk	Undead	21
2	Minotaur infiltrator	Humanoid	16
2	Oddlewin	Fey	14
3	Brusipha	Humanoid	16
3	Harrow hound	Undead	19
3	Living portent	Celestial	21
4	Fate hag	Fey	21
4	Initiate of the Comet	Humanoid	12
4	Werevulture	Fiend	21
5	Ambitious assassin	Humanoid	6
5	Riffler	Fey	21
5	Ruin spider	Monstrosity	21
5	Sir Jared	Humanoid	10
7	Talon beast	Monstrosity	21
9	Boss Augustus	Monstrosity	11
9	Boss Delour	Monstrosity	11
9	Gremorly's ghost	Undead	15
9	Solar Bastion knight	Humanoid	10
11	Enchanting infiltrator	Fey	6
11	Hierophant of the Comet	Humanoid	12

CR	Stat Block	Creature Type	Chapter
14	Breath drinker	Aberration	18
14	Hulgaz	Fiend	20
15	Grim Champion of Pestilence	Undead	19
17	Hierophant medusa	Monstrosity	21
17	Otherworldly corrupter	Aberration	6
18	Asteria	Humanoid	22
18	Euryale	Monstrosity	22
18	Malaxxix	Fiend	20
20	Grim Champion of Bloodshed	Undead	19
21	Pazrodine	Dragon	14
21	Veiled presence	Celestial	6
22	Aurnozci	Fiend	20
25	Grim Champion of Desolation	Undead	19

ABIGAIL LARSON

Fate Hag

Fate hags are servants of destiny that mostly reside in the Feywild and Shadowfell or near crossings to those realms from the Material Plane. The aspects of fate to which a fate hag is most attuned depends on the plane where the hag dwells—hopeful and prosperous in the Feywild or dire and doomed in the Shadowfell.

Fate hags carry gleaming magical shears they use to snip strands of fate. These shears are frightful weapons, severing a foe's destiny as well as its flesh. Fate hags often glimpse others' destinies when truths are revealed to them, when they lay curses, and when they offer divinations; they delight in such glimpses and are compelled to speak of what they see. Those who dare harm a fate hag find silvery threads of destiny winding around their bodies, tightening and slicing deeper as fate turns against the hag's foes.

Fate Hag

Medium Fey, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +3, Wis +6
Skills Arcana +5, Deception +6, History +5, Perception +6
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages all
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If the hag fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Trace the Threads (1/Day). The hag can cast the *Legend Lore* spell, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability.

Actions

Multiattack. The hag makes two Shears attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Spellcasting.

Shears. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) force damage. If the target is a creature, it has disadvantage on attack rolls until the end of the hag's next turn.

Spellcasting. While holding its shears, the hag casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

At will: *Bless*, *Guidance*, *Silent Image*
1/day each: *Bane*, *Bestow Curse*, *Divination*, *Scrying* (as an action)

Legendary Actions

The hag can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The hag regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Destined Jaunt. The hag magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, to an unoccupied space it can see within 30 feet of itself.

Tangle Threads. The hag magically tangles a creature it can see within 60 feet of itself in spectral silver threads. The creature must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw, or its speed is reduced to 0 until the end of its next turn.

Destiny Curse (Costs 2 Actions). The hag magically curses a creature it can see within 60 feet of itself. The creature must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw, and the creature has disadvantage on this save if it has damaged the hag within the last minute. On a failed save, the creature has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws until the curse ends. Once per turn, when the cursed creature fails one of those d20 rolls, it takes 7 (2d6) force damage. The curse ends after 1 minute; when the creature succeeds on a total of three ability checks, attack rolls, or saving throws in any combination; or when the hag uses this action again.

CLAUDIO POZAS

Harrow Hawk

Tiny Undead, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 25 (10d4)
Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (–3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	2 (–4)	14 (+2)	7 (–2)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Actions

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage.

Plane Shift (2/Day). The hawk casts *Plane Shift* on itself, requiring no spell components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability.

Bonus Actions

Shadow Dash. When the hawk is in dim light or darkness, it teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see that is also in dim light or darkness. The hawk then has advantage on the first melee attack it makes before the end of the turn.

Harrow Hawk

When a beloved animal companion dies traumatically alongside its master, the beast might rise again as an Undead. Falcons, ravens, and other birds of prey that suffer this fate are known as harrow hawks, and they prowl abandoned battlefields and cemeteries, looking for corpses to eat and living creatures to hunt. A harrow hawk can even travel the multiverse, flying magically from one world to another.

The Grim Harrow—a band of Undead beings created by the *Deck of Many Things* (see chapter 19)—seeks out harrow hawks, capturing them and training them as hunting animals. The Grim Harrow dispatches these Undead companions from the Gardens of Decay to search for *Decks of Many Things*. On harrowing hunts, harrow hawks scout for the prey and accompany the Grim Harrow in battle.

Hierophant Medusa

Sometimes deeply devout people, usually either Humanoids or medusas, dedicate themselves to a cause and are transformed by a deity or magic into hierophant medusas—beings with powerful snake-like tails for their lower body, snakes for hair, and a petrifying gaze. The first hierophant medusa was transformed by the power of the Euryale card when that individual was inspired by Euryale's story and unwavering conviction.

These medusas are divinely empowered champions, drawing their power from a cosmic truth, the will of a deity, or the primal forces of nature. They gather and inspire followers, protecting their people and guiding them to fulfill the medusa's divine purpose. The Divine Purpose table offers suggestions for motivations. Roll on the table, or use the entries as inspiration to create your own.

Divine Purpose

d6	Purpose
1	Protect a sanctuary that hides martyrs' remains until the martyrs are called back to life to oppose a world-changing foe.
2	Gather the lost shards of a dead god's petrified body, and reunite them on the altar in the medusa's lair.
3	Maintain a planar crossing from which great power flows while also curtailing the effects of that power as it infuses the world.
4	Seek out a new generation of champions, and train them to fight in a war.
5	Tend a sacred beacon fed by the Outer Planes, sending embers of that beacon to the corners of the world to maintain a divine shroud.
6	Watch the entrance to a slumbering titan's tomb for any sign the titan might awaken, and repel the forces that seek to break the tomb's seal.

A Medusa's Lair

A medusa's lair is often decorated with the petrified bodies of creatures that raised arms against the medusa or its followers. The lair is typically a rich repository of knowledge, with lore both worldly and esoteric filling books, scrolls, tablets, or stranger archives—such as magical crystals that hold captured memories or the voices of those long dead. You can use this lair and the lair actions described for any medusa, including the hierophant medusa or the medusa in the *Monster Manual*.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the medusa can take one of the following lair actions; the medusa can't take the same lair action two rounds in a row:

Petrifying Wave. Up to three creatures the medusa can see within the lair are partially turned to stone. Each target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target's speed is reduced to 0 and can't increase. On a successful save, its speed is halved. The target's speed returns to normal on initiative count 20 on the following round.

Sudden Stonework. The medusa creates a wall of stone on a solid surface it can see within the lair. The wall can be up to 60 feet long, 20 feet high, and 1 foot thick. Each 5-foot section of the wall has an AC of 17; 30 hit points; vulnerability to thunder damage; and immunity to poison, psychic, and slashing damage. A creature in the wall's space when the wall appears is pushed to the nearest unoccupied space on one side of the wall and must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the medusa chooses the side. On a successful save, the creature chooses the side. The wall disappears when the medusa uses this lair action again or when the medusa dies.

Undulating Surface. Solid surfaces within the lair ripple like a snake's coils. Up to three creatures the medusa can see within the lair can move up to 30 feet along solid surfaces without provoking opportunity attacks. If a creature moves along a surface such as a ceiling with no way to remain there (for example, sufficient handholds), it falls at the end of this movement.

Regional Effects

The region containing a medusa's lair is altered by the medusa's presence, creating one or more of the following effects:

Faces in Stone. Stone within 3 miles of the lair takes on subtle shapes that suggest people, animals, and other creatures when viewed from the corner of the eye or through dim light or fog.

Gathered Knowledge. Within the lair, creatures have advantage on ability checks made to discover or recall information relevant to the medusa's divine purpose.

If the medusa dies, these effects fade over the course of 1d10 days.

Hierophant Medusa

Large Monstrosity, Any Alignment

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 237 (25d10 + 100)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	23 (+6)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Con +10, Wis +12
Skills Insight +12, Perception +12, Persuasion +12, Religion +8, Stealth +11
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, petrified, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 22
Languages Common plus any three languages (Abyssal, Celestial, Druidic, or Infernal recommended)
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Devotion's Call (1/Day). The medusa can cast the *Resurrection* spell, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability.

Legendary Resistance (4/Day). If the medusa fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The medusa makes one Constrict attack, one Final Blade attack, and one Snake Hair attack. Alternatively, it makes two Wrathful Strike attacks.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and if the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the grappled condition (escape DC 20). Until this grapple ends, the target has the restrained condition, and the medusa can't constrict another creature.

Final Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 21 (6d6) force damage. If the target has at least one head and the medusa rolled a 20 on the attack roll, the target is decapitated and dies if it fails a DC 20 Constitution saving throw and can't survive without that head. A target is immune to this effect if it takes none of the damage, has legendary actions, or is Huge or larger. Such a creature takes an extra 28 (8d6) force damage from the hit.

Snake Hair. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage.

Wrathful Strike. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) radiant damage, and the target has the blinded condition until the end of its next turn.

Spellcasting. The medusa casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 20):

At will: *Light, Spare the Dying, Thaumaturgy*
2/day: *Mass Cure Wounds* (cast at 8th level)
1/day each: *Blade Barrier, Divination, Greater Restoration*

Bonus Actions

Petrifying Gaze (Recharge 4–6). The medusa unleashes petrifying magic from its eyes in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw if it doesn't have the blinded condition. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature has the petrified condition. Otherwise, on a failed save, the creature takes 10 (3d6) force damage, begins to turn to stone, and has the restrained condition. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a failed save, it has the petrified condition, and on a successful save, the effect ends on it. The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the *Greater Restoration* spell or other magic.

A creature can use its reaction, if available, to shut its eyes to avoid the saving throw. If the creature does so, it has the blinded condition until the end of its next turn.

Legendary Actions

The medusa can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. It can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The medusa regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The medusa moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.
Wrathful Blast (Costs 2 Actions). The medusa makes one Wrathful Strike attack.
Final Slash (Costs 3 Actions). The medusa makes one Final Blade attack with advantage.

JOANNA BARNUM

Living Portent

Living portents are embodiments of prophecy sent by deities or other cosmic forces. These Celestials descend to Material Plane worlds in the form of falling stars. When the living portents impact the earth, they carve great craters, yet miraculously, none who live in the impact zone are harmed. These beings of light then assume Humanoid forms to blend in with the inhabitants of the world.

Living portents seek out beings who will play a part in the prophecies they serve, and as the living portents search, they relate fragments of the prophecies to those they encounter.

Variant: Servants of Living Stars

Some stars in the sky are Elder Evils, alien beings of godlike power from the reality-defying Far Realm. A living portent can be a fragment of these beings' will. These living portents are Aberrations instead of Celestials and are typically chaotic evil. They replace any radiant damage in their stat block with necrotic or psychic damage (DM's choice). Their spells might also be different. Some known Elder Evils include the following:

Acamar. A dead star that consumes other stars or sidereal bodies it encounters.

Caiphon, the Dream Whisperer. A purple star whose guidance and minions seem to help for a time but whose influence inevitably leads to disaster.

Hadar, the Dark Hunger. A cinder-red dying star that siphons life from its minions to avert its own demise.

Khirad, the Star of Secrets. A blue-white star whose gifts grant insight but also reveal terrible truths.

Zhudun, the Corpse Star. A dead star that whispers of the power to defy death.

Living Portent

Small or Medium Celestial, Typically Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Insight +5, Perception +5
Damage Immunities radiant
Condition Immunities exhaustion
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages all
Challenge 3 (700 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Brilliance (True Form Only). The living portent sheds bright light for 30 feet and dim light for an additional 30 feet.

Actions

Multiattack. The living portent makes two Radiant Strike attacks.

Radiant Strike. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) radiant damage.

Prophetic Blessing. The living portent magically infuses the power of its prophecy into another willing creature the living portent can see within 30 feet of itself. The target's hit point maximum and current hit points increase by 7 (1d8 + 3), and it gains a prophecy die, a d8. Once during each of the creature's turns, when it fails an ability check or saving throw or misses an attack roll, it can roll the prophecy die and add the number rolled to the total, potentially changing the outcome. The blessing ends after 1 hour or when the living portent ends the blessing (no action required) or uses this action again.

Spellcasting. The living portent casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability:

2/day: *Cure Wounds*
1/day each: *Divination, Greater Restoration*

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The living portent magically transforms into a Humanoid while retaining its game statistics (other than its size and Brilliance trait). The transformation ends if the living portent is reduced to 0 hit points or uses a bonus action to end it.

Reactions

Price of Defiance. When the living portent is damaged by a creature that it can see within 120 feet of itself, radiant power sears the creature. The creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

KATERINA LADON

Riffler

Rifflers are diminutive Fey reminiscent of gnomes and obsessed with destiny and fate. The oldest stories of rifflers suggest these dangerously curious spirits manifested as physical beings when the *Deck of Many Things* was shuffled for the first time. The rifflers were so enraptured with the soft sound made by the whispering cards that they made physical bodies for themselves in order to possess and understand this new instrument of destiny.

Rifflers wander the Feywild and Material Plane, searching for *Decks of Many Things*. They collect the cards, trade them, hoard them, and scatter them across worlds, all in service of an incomprehensible agenda to manipulate the fate of the multiverse. Rifflers are as likely to give a deck to adventurers in dire need as they are to wrest cards from an innocent person by any means necessary.

Both the Solar Bastion (see chapter 10) and the Grim Harrow (see chapter 19) know of rifflers and their obsession with *Decks of Many Things*, and these organizations stay alert for signs of these Fey creatures, since that usually means a deck is nearby.

Riffler

Small Fey, Typically Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 90 (20d6 + 20)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +6
Skills Arcana +6, Insight +5, Sleight of Hand +9, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances necrotic, radiant
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Card Sense. The riffler can smell the presence of magical cards, including *Decks of Many Things* and other magical decks, within 1 mile of itself. It knows the direction to any such cards in that range. Effects that protect a target from divination magic block this sense.

Riffling Step. The riffler can burrow through any nonmagical material that isn't iron, shuffling the substance through which the riffler moves aside like cards to form a tunnel that closes behind the riffler.

Actions

Multiattack. The riffler makes two Spectral Card attacks.

Spectral Card. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) force damage plus 5 (1d10) damage that is radiant if the d10 roll is an even number and necrotic if it's odd.

Card Spray (Recharge 5–6). The riffler magically unleashes a spray of spectral cards in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 27 (5d10) force damage and has the restrained condition for 1 minute as cards bind it. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage only. A restrained creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Plane Shift. The riffler casts the *Plane Shift* spell targeting only itself, requiring no material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability.

Reactions

Shuffle Destiny. When a creature the riffler can see within 30 feet of itself makes an ability check, an attack roll, or a saving throw, the riffler can magically force that creature to roll a d6 and either add the number rolled to the total or subtract it from the total (riffler's choice), potentially changing the outcome.

KATERINA LADON

I lost my favorite necklace to a ruin spider; the pendant had a large bead I could spin whenever I got nervous. I haven't been able to find a good replacement since.

Ruin Spider

The potent magic of a *Deck of Many Things* can have unpredictable effects on its environment, especially when the deck remains in one place for a long time.

Ruin spiders arise when the magic of the deck transforms giant spiders into even more dangerous monsters whose acidic venom disintegrates everything it touches. A ruin spider is easily recognizable by anyone familiar with the *Deck of Many Things* because the pattern on the back of the cards is duplicated on the spider's carapace.

Ruin Spider

Large Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 105 (14d10 + 28)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	2 (–4)	13 (+1)	4 (–3)

Skills Stealth +10
Damage Immunities acid
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Ruinous Acid. Any nonmagical weapon that hits the spider corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to –5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal that hits the spider is destroyed after dealing damage.

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The spider makes two Ruinous Bite attacks. It can replace one attack with a use of Web.

Ruinous Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage and 9 (2d8) acid damage. In addition, if the target is a creature wearing nonmagical armor, the armor takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an Armor Class of 10 is destroyed.

Web (Recharge 5–6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target has the restrained condition. As an action, a restrained target can make a DC 13 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a successful check. The webbing can also be destroyed (AC 10; 5 hit points; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to acid, bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

I wish talon beasts would use some of their absorbed magic to conjure fur, or clothes, or something! But no. They have to be upsettingly naked-looking.

Talon Beast

Talon beasts are hairless quadrupeds that have vulturelike heads and talons. They can sense the presence of magic and feed on it, absorbing spells and the power of magic items. But magic isn't enough to sustain them, so they also hunt other living things. A talon beast thrives in the wilderness, but in its search for magic, it often prowls settlements, ruins, catacombs, or the Underdark.

Many scholars agree there's a link between talon beasts, the constellation of the Talons (see chapter 13), and the Talons card found in a *Deck of Many Things*, but it's not clear which came first. The card—which destroys all magic items possessed by anyone who draws it—might have been named after the beast, or vice versa.

Talon Beast

Large Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	5 (–3)	12 (+1)	5 (–3)

Skills Perception +4
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +3

Magic Resistance. The talon beast has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sense Magic. The talon beast can detect and pinpoint the location of magic within 120 feet of itself.

Actions

Multiattack. The talon beast makes two Talon attacks or a Talon attack and a Beak attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage, and if the target has any spell effects on itself or any magic items in its possession, the target must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, a random spell effect on the target ends. If the target has no spell effects on it, one random magic item in its possession has its magical properties suppressed for 1 minute. If the item is a potion or scroll, it becomes nonmagical instead.

Talon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage, and the target has the grappled condition (escape DC 17). Until the grapple ends, the target has the restrained condition, and the talon beast can't use Talon on another target.

HEX SHARPE

Werevulture

Scholars believe the curse of the werevulture is related to vrocks, vulturelike demons known for their covetousness and their capricious violence. According to these scholars, a flock of vrocks descended on a Material Plane world through a planar rupture, leaving plagues and other afflictions in their wake. Many of those who were injured by the demons survived, and the survivors gratefully thanked their gods for their apparent good fortune. But during the next full moon, they transformed into the first werevultures: hideous, birdlike creatures who hungered for the flesh of the dead. In the years since, the curse has spread far and wide.

Werevultures appear perfectly ordinary when in humanoid shape. But by the light of the full moon—or at other times when they give in to the curse—they change. Foul wings burst painfully from their backs, and the hair falls from their heads, leaving their beaked faces bare and wrinkled. Werevultures feed on carrion, as ordinary vultures do, and they have a covetous nature, like vrocks. They follow travelers from high in the air, and when a pretty bauble catches their eye, they descend rapidly to slay the travelers and take their victims' treasures.

Werevulture

Medium Fiend, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft. in humanoid form; 10 ft., fly 60 ft. in vulture form; 30 ft., fly 60 ft. in hybrid form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common (can't speak in vulture form)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +2

Regeneration. The werevulture regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the werevulture takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the werevulture's next turn. The werevulture dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. The werevulture makes two Talon attacks, or it makes a Beak attack and a Talon attack.

Beak (Vulture or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a Humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be cursed until targeted by the *Remove Curse* spell or a similar effect. If the cursed target drops to 0 hit points, it becomes a werevulture under the DM's control and regains 10 hit points.

Talon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (4d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Longbow (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The werevulture polymorphs into a vulture-humanoid hybrid, into a vulture, or back into its humanoid form. Its game statistics, other than its speed, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its humanoid form if it dies.

CHAPTER 22

EURYALE

TINNEL LOVITT

THOUGH MANY CARDS IN THE *DECK OF MANY Things* depict individuals, only one card bears a proper name: Euryale, a baneful card with a medusa-like visage. Many sages have pondered who this individual is and why she appears in the deck, speculating that perhaps Euryale is a fearsome demigod or the wielder of a destructive curse. But the truth is simple: the *Deck of Many Things* was created through the actions of the person who held Euryale most dear.

Long ago, the zealous ruler of a small coastal kingdom had a daughter he named Asteria, or "shining star" in the language of the kingdom, for the stars shone auspiciously on her birth. But Asteria defied his expectations. While other nobles' children happily played with their bevy of toys, Asteria intently focused on cataloging every constellation she could find. When other children greeted their parents with high heads and laughter, Asteria smiled firmly at the ground. Over time, Asteria's father grew discontented with his daughter, frustrated by his many failed attempts to mold Asteria into a person who matched the ideas in his head. The princess grew up isolated and independent, resenting the unending pressure others placed on her to be someone other than herself.

One afternoon, as Asteria swam alone as a reprieve from her peers, a rip current swallowed her. Waves battered her against the rocks, then carried her unconscious body far from the kingdom's shore to a secret grotto in which the reclusive medusa Euryale lived alone. Despite Euryale's anxiety (she was painfully aware that even kind folk feared her petrifying gaze), she tended to Asteria's wounds. When Asteria awoke, the young woman didn't panic. Instead, the pair chatted throughout the night, talking of the stars, the sea, and everything else they had longed to share with someone for so long.

Asteria stayed until her wounds were healed. But rather than return to a father who was always disappointed in her, she decided to let her father assume she was dead. The secluded grotto became her new home. Over the years, Euryale taught Asteria how to be a steward of the land, while Asteria provided companionship, freely sharing with Euryale all the esoteric interests she had pursued as a child. The two were sisters in all but blood, for Euryale didn't pressure Asteria to conform to her ways or to look her in the eye, and Asteria didn't view Euryale as a terrifying monster. Their existences blissfully intertwined for years, with neither forcing the other to be anything but themselves.

This peace was not to last, for Asteria's father never gave up hope his daughter still lived. After a decade of searching, he found her new home and ordered his soldiers to retrieve her through any means necessary. The idyllic grotto was overrun by violence, and although Euryale defended her home and her sister with fervent abandon, turning many of the intruders to stone, both women were captured and taken to the coastal kingdom.

Determined to rein in his wayward daughter, the king locked Asteria away in a keep and sentenced Euryale to death. Asteria, horrified, tried everything to save her dearest friend, but her pleas were dismissed. In desperation, she broke out of the keep, but she was overwhelmed by guards. Only then,

EURYALE AND ASTERIA HAVE HAD MANY ADVENTURES ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE.

after exhausting all options, did Asteria give in to rage, screaming at the stars that were her namesake, searching for an answer.

An answer came, but it was not the one Asteria hoped for. Istus, a god of fate, heard the princess and visited her in the keep that night. Every door opened for Istus, and invisible to every guard, she led Asteria onto the cliffs, where—pointing out the constellations that governed Asteria's and Euryale's fates—Istus explained that nothing could be done. It was Asteria's destiny to be a dutiful daughter and princess, and it was Euryale's fate to be remembered forever as a tragic villain. Asteria wasn't sure which part of this destiny she resented more.

"We don't get to choose our stories," the god explained.

"Don't we?" Asteria replied. "I chose to see Euryale differently, as she did me. That was enough to change our stories once, years ago. Let me change them again."

Swayed by Asteria's conviction, Istus reluctantly admitted that Asteria's and Euryale's fates could be rewritten, but the consequences of such an action were impossible to predict. Both women could get new destinies, but they might be no better than the last, and they could be worse. But Asteria was adamant, so Istus reached into the sky and pulled down twenty-two constellations to form a deck of oracle cards: the first *Deck of Many Things*. Placing thirteen of these cards face up, one by one, Istus rewrote Asteria and Euryale's story.

Armed with her new destiny, Asteria rescued Euryale, and the two have since had many grand adventures together. In time, Euryale longed once more for a quiet life; the two women found a site in the Outlands that reminded them of the grotto that had once been their home, and Euryale retired there from adventuring. Asteria, however, still felt a fervent desire to defend others from the injustice of destiny. Taking up the symbol of the medusa as an icon of protection, strength, and her dearest friend, Asteria has continued her journey alone. But Istus's act echoed through the multiverse, and the original *Deck of Many Things* reflected across the planes, manifesting in varied forms throughout the cosmos.

The Princess and the Gardener

Adventurers are most likely to seek out Asteria and Euryale for information on the *Deck of Many Things*. This section provides information about these two legendary figures, as well as adventure hooks and stat blocks for each hero.

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Asteria

Though she now travels alone, Asteria still draws much of her power from her bond with Euryale. Asteria is foremost a protector and warrior, traveling the multiverse to uproot injustice, defend innocents, and inspire hope. She believes everyone deserves a chance to write their own story on their own terms, and her deeds have inspired countless heroic tales.

Even after so many years, Asteria maintains a joyous wanderlust and passion for discovery. She's as likely to be found climbing trees or poring over arcane texts as she is brandishing her sword in battle. Anyone who engages Asteria in conversation about her interests finds her an overflowing font of information. But she also retains her stubborn streak and quickly repudiates anyone who tries to order her around.

Asteria hasn't aged since Istus drew her future from the first *Deck of Many Things*. She doesn't know why this is but surmises her life is tied to that deck; so long as it continues to exist, so will she. She has no way to prove this hypothesis, but she nevertheless opposes groups like the Grim Harrow (see chapter 19) that seek to destroy the *Deck of Many Things*.

Adventure Hooks

Asteria knows more about *Decks of Many Things* than anyone else alive. She has encountered many factions that concern themselves with the decks, defeating hierophants of the Heralds of the Comet (see chapter 12), dueling undead champions from the Grim Harrow, and infiltrating the Solar Bastion (see chapter 10) before Hilarion discovered her. Asteria is driven to protect innocent people who accidentally stumble across decks from their many dangers—especially from the curse imposed by the Euryale card, which Asteria resents as a defamation of her devoted friend. For this and many other reasons, Asteria tracks down the decks—and information on them—wherever they can be found.

Beyond her knowledge of *Decks of Many Things*, Asteria is an avid researcher into all things magical, making her an excellent knowledge source. She finds arcane magic particularly interesting. As an altruistic and heroic figure, Asteria also makes a fine patron for adventuring groups that align with her values. The following adventure hooks can introduce Asteria into your campaign:

Arcane Information. Asteria knows a wealth of information regarding magic items and other arcane artifacts. Characters searching for rare or highly specialized knowledge could track down the legendary Asteria for assistance.

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Hunting Decks. Asteria does her best to keep track of every iteration of the *Deck of Many Things* in the multiverse to ensure their power doesn't fall into corrupt hands; however, she's only one person, and things slip her notice. Asteria might task the characters with locating a wayward deck and—if it's in the hands of someone who would abuse its fate-altering power—securing the deck and delivering it to her.

Euryale

When she retired from adventuring, Euryale relocated to Cair Ophidian, a small hideaway in the Outlands detailed later in this chapter. There, Euryale embraced the quiet life of a gardener, and she spends her time tending to the plants she's cultivated around her home. However, should Asteria call for her aid, Euryale would venture across the multiverse without hesitation, battling tooth and nail to protect her sister.

Euryale has the petrifying gaze and venomous snaky hair of other medusas. But as an ancient and powerful druid, Euryale often adopts the form of a hulking serpent when threatened. She has attained precise control over her petrifying gaze, rendering her immune to its effects and allowing her to use it while not in her medusa guise. Despite her alarming appearance in serpent form, Euryale remains a healer and caretaker at heart.

Adventure Hooks

Euryale is a worthy ally or patron for an adventuring party and is a powerful druid with a wealth of knowledge and connections across the multiverse. Legends state that her garden in Cair Ophidian contains magical plants that can undo potent curses, including those inflicted by a *Deck of Many Things*. The following adventure hooks can introduce Euryale into your campaign:

Multiverse Messengers. Euryale maintains contact with friends and allies across the multiverse, and because she rarely travels now, she often needs the aid of others to deliver messages, packages, and other communications. Euryale might enlist the characters to deliver something to one of her contacts, offering rare plants or gold in return.

Asteria

Medium Humanoid (Human, Paladin), Chaotic Good

Armor Class 18 (breastplate, shield)
Hit Points 195 (26d8 + 78)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (*Winged Boots*)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	21 (+5)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +9, Wis +6, Cha +11
Skills Acrobatics +11, Arcana +14, Investigation +8, Perception +12, Persuasion +11, Survival +6
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 22
Languages Common, Druidic
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Guardian Aura. Whenever a creature of Asteria's choice within 30 feet of her makes a saving throw, Asteria can give the creature advantage on the saving throw (no action required). This trait doesn't function if Asteria has the incapacitated condition.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Asteria fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Special Equipment. Asteria wears *Winged Boots*, which grant her a flying speed (included in her statistics). She also carries one half of a pair of *Sending Stones*; the other half of the pair is held by Euryale.

Actions

Multiattack. Asteria makes two Radiant Blade attacks and uses Bursting Benediction.

Radiant Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) radiant damage.

Bursting Benediction. Asteria causes a burst of magical energy to envelop one creature she can see within 60 feet of herself. The target must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 40 (9d8) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Asteria or another creature that she can see within 60 feet of herself then regains 10 hit points.

Spellcasting. Asteria casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19):

At will: *Guidance*, *Light*, *Thaumaturgy*
2/day each: *Bless*, *Freedom of Movement*, *Greater Restoration*, *Plane Shift* (self only), *Protection from Evil and Good*, *Revivify*

Bonus Actions

Empowering Aegis (Recharge 4–6). Asteria summons a spectral version of her shield, which orbits and bolsters one creature of Asteria's choice that she can see within 60 feet of herself. The spectral shield lasts until the start of Asteria's next turn. While the shield is orbiting the creature, the creature has half cover, is immune to the frightened condition, and makes weapon attack rolls with advantage.

Legendary Actions

Asteria can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Asteria regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Brazen Strike. Asteria makes one Radiant Blade attack.
Nimble Sprint. Asteria moves up to her speed. This movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.
Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). Asteria uses Spellcasting.

Powerful Flowers. Euryale's garden contains many magical flowers, including some that allow an individual to cast the *Wish* spell. Characters might seek out Euryale's flower garden if they need powerful magic dispelled, such as the effects of the more ruinous cards from a *Deck of Many Things*.

Zoology and Herbology. As an archdruid, Euryale knows much regarding primal magic, nature gods, and rare magical flora and fauna. Characters might seek her out when their own knowledge in these areas is insufficient.

Euryale

Medium Monstrosity (Druid, Medusa), Neutral Good

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 297 (35d8 + 140)
Speed 30 ft. in medusa form; 50 ft., climb 50 ft. in serpent form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +10, Int +7, Wis +11
Skills Animal Handling +11, Insight +17, Medicine +11, Nature +13, Perception +11
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Common, Druidic
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +6

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Euryale fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Special Equipment. Euryale carries one half of a pair of *Sending Stones*; the other half of the pair is held by Asteria.

Actions

Multiattack. Euryale makes three attacks. If she is in serpent form, only one of these attacks can be Constrict.

Constrict (Serpent Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one Large or smaller creature. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target has the grappled condition (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target takes 11 (2d10) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turns, and Euryale can't constrict another target.

Snake Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or have the poisoned condition until the start of Euryale's next turn.

Verdant Bolt (Medusa Form Only). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) acid damage.

Spellcasting (Medusa Form Only). Euryale casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19):

At will: *Druidcraft*, *Pass without Trace*
2/day each: *Goodberry*, *Lesser Restoration*, *Locate Creature*, *Move Earth*, *Transport via Plants*

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. Euryale changes shape into her Huge serpent form or back into her Medium medusa form. Euryale's game statistics are the same in each form except where noted in this stat block. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. Euryale reverts to her medusa form if she dies.

Petrifying Gaze (Recharge 4–6). Euryale unleashes petrifying magic from her eyes in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw if it doesn't have the blinded condition. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature has the petrified condition. Otherwise, on a failed save, the creature takes 14 (4d6) force damage, begins to turn to stone, and has the restrained condition. The restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a failed save, it has the petrified condition, and on a successful save, the effect ends on it, The petrification lasts until the creature is freed by the *Greater Restoration* spell or other magic

A creature can use its reaction, if available, to shut its eyes to avoid the saving throw. If the creature does so, it has the blinded condition until the end of its next turn.

Legendary Actions

Euryale can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Euryale regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Move. Euryale moves up to her speed.
Venomous Strike (Costs 2 Actions). Euryale makes one Snake Bite attack. If the target has the poisoned condition, the attack deals an extra 16 (3d10) poison damage.

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MAP 22.1: CAIR OPHIDIAN

CAIR OPHIDIAN

Tucked away in a secluded region in the Outlands lies Euryale's home, Cair Ophidian. The site once held a palatial retreat built around a waterfall by a family of noble marids, but it was abandoned by its creators. During Asteria and Euryale's adventures together, they stumbled upon the retreat's ruins and began using them as a safe house. Over the years, the pair rebuilt parts of the retreat, transforming it from a temporary hideaway into a home, which they named Cair Ophidian.

Now, Euryale tends to her gardens and occasionally entertains lost travelers. When not exploring the multiverse, Asteria can also be found at Cair Ophidian, visiting her dearest friend and recuperating before setting off on another adventure.

CAIR OPHIDIAN LOCATIONS

Map 22.1 depicts the buildings and gardens of Cair Ophidian.

FLOWER GARDEN

Euryale's pride and joy, the flower garden boasts blooms from across the multiverse. A creature who plucks a flower from the garden rolls on the Cair Ophidian Flowers table to determine the type of flower chosen. A creature that spends 10 minutes studying the flowers can make a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) check; on a successful check, the creature can choose which flower it plucks from the table instead of rolling randomly. A serene **guardian naga** named Jyada lives in the garden and serves as its protector. Should a creature try to sneak into the garden or pluck a flower without Euryale's permission, Jyada attacks.

FOOD GARDENS

Cair Ophidian's food gardens include a small vineyard, a bountiful vegetable garden plot, and a lush orchard. The gardens' produce is nonmagical and tastes excellent, and Euryale uses it for cooking. Four **couatls** watch over the food gardens; they often adopt the shape of friendly **mastiffs**.

GUESTHOUSE

A single-story guesthouse sits on the cliff above the hot spring and gardens. This building is empty unless Asteria and Euryale are hosting friends or wayward travelers there. The guesthouse has a single large bed, but room for up to five people in a pinch.

RAINBOW HOT SPRING

Stairs lead from what was once a plaza, now crumbling and overgrown, directly into this hot spring's steaming, prismatic waters. A creature that spends at least 1 hour bathing in the hot spring immediately

MIKE SCHLEY

gains the benefits of finishing a long rest. A creature can benefit from the hot spring's magic once every 24 hours.

Villa

Overlooking the shimmering waterfall, Cair Ophidian's villa is Asteria and Euryale's home. The first story is an open space for lounging, dining, and meeting with guests. The second story contains both women's private living quarters as well as a small observatory and library. Asteria keeps a fantastic collection of magical cards in this library, including multiple versions of the *Deck of Many Things* gathered from around the multiverse. Some of these decks are incomplete or contain unusual cards; a few take alternative forms, such as a die with twenty-two sides or a collection of twenty-two runestones.

Adventure Hooks

Below are several adventure hooks you can use to draw characters to Cair Ophidian:

Deck Heist. The characters are approached by mysterious individuals who want to hire them to steal Asteria's collection of magical cards. These patrons are agents of the Grim Harrow, who expect the adventurers to attract the ire of Asteria and Euryale, giving the Grim Harrow a chance to destroy the collection in the chaos. To complicate matters, rifflers (see chapter 21) have learned of the heist and are trying to beat the characters to the score.

Extraplanar Eviction. The marids who constructed the original palace on the site of Cair Ophidian decide the new complex is an outrageous insult. With a retinue of extraplanar servants, they drive Euryale out. This conflict could be resolved diplomatically, but the marids are deceptive and proud, concealing the reason they left their estate and refusing to negotiate with Asteria or Euryale, who turn to the characters for help.

Guest in Need. Euryale discovers a wounded traveler in the Outlands and brings them to Cair Ophidian to recover. This guest remembers nothing from before Euryale found them, not even their name. Euryale asks the characters to track down her guest's identity while she monitors the guest's recovery. Tie the identity of this guest—and the inevitable complications that arise—to the direction you want to take the campaign. For example, perhaps the traveler is an astral elf, and the characters must secure a spelljamming vessel to learn more. Or the wayward guest might be a refugee from Ravenloft— perhaps even a Darklord in disguise!

Wishing Lion

Cair Ophidian Flowers

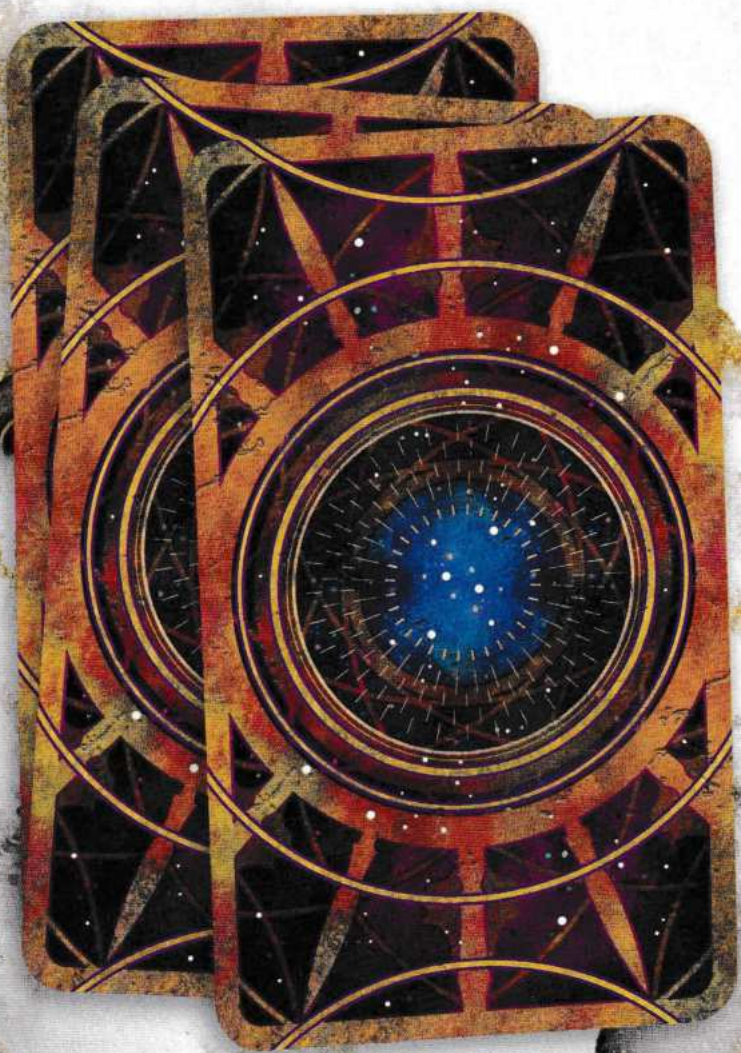
d20	Flower
1–10	**Nonmagical Flower.** This bloom has no magical properties but is very pretty.
11–14	**Swift Lily.** This flower crackles with energy. As a bonus action, you can crush the flower to increase your speed by 30 feet until the start of your next turn. The flower is then destroyed. The flower loses its magic 1d6 days after being plucked.
15–17	**Drowsing Lavender.** This stalk of purple blooms glows faintly. As an action, you can wave it at a creature within your reach. The creature must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or have the unconscious condition until the start of your next turn. Once used this way, the flower is destroyed. The flower loses its magic 1d8 days after being plucked.
18–19	**Iron Peony.** This flower's petals are silver-tipped. As a bonus action, you can crush the flower to gain resistance to all damage until the start of your next turn. The flower is then destroyed. This flower loses its magic 1d12 days after being plucked.
20	**Wishing Lion.** This flower appears as a dandelion with a tiny lion head embedded in the fluff. As an action, you can blow on the fluff and cast the *Wish* spell. The flower is then destroyed. This flower retains its magic until the spell is cast.

Conclusion

We've reached the last card, the bottom of the deck.

It's customary for individuals to want to get in the last word, a final piece of advice that ties everything together. Alas, I'm not a particularly poetic or wise person. In comparison to many, I'm new to this vast multiverse of ours, and I still have much to learn. I'm not a demigod, a mighty archmage, or a renowned witch queen; I'm simply Asteria, a woman who looked fate in the eyes and chose to rewrite her story.

You've seen my thoughts scattered throughout this book. I've seen the power each card in a *Deck of Many Things* possesses, and I know how that power can affect individual lives. I've battled those slain by the decks' machinations and walked alongside knights who protect innocents who come across a deck, I've seen how the decks inspire people, and I've witnessed adventurers explore extradimensional prisons and learn new magic. I know the patterns and puzzles written in the stars, for I was there when the first *Deck of Many Things* was created from them.



I've forged my life with my own hands and made it into one weird, dangerous, and amazing adventure, and I wouldn't have it any other way—though a certain god of fate might disagree with me.

But does it really matter what Istus thinks? Or anyone, god or mortal? We can write about fate until our pens run out of ink, but in the end, the only person who can define your destiny is you.

It all traces back to the *Deck of Many Things*, that strange and infamous thing whose manifestations have altered the fates of many for better and for worse. Travelers who meet me often ask my opinion about the decks. When they ask, I can tell some have already made up their minds. Whether they view the decks as abominations, tools, or their only hope, they don't want my opinion, just my validation.

For those who truly want my opinion, here it is: quantifying *Decks of Many Things* as wholly good or bad misses the point. Even without a deck's interference, life is a chaotic and nonsensical jumble of joyous highs and miserable lows, right choices and wrong decisions, and everything in between. Each deck just gives us a way to tap into that chaos and make it our own. It's just one of many ways to take your story into your own hands.

If I've learned anything, it's that your story isn't over until you say it is—until you place that very last sentence on the page and let the ink dry. So chase your dreams, take a chance, and maybe draw a card or two. Whatever happens, it's sure to be an amazing story.

And I, for one, can't wait to hear it.

-Asteria

PICK A CARD, ANY CARD

The Book of Many Things™ reveals the secrets of the *Deck of Many Things*™, one of the most infamous magic items in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. The book explores the deck's divine creator and the undead hunters who want to destroy the deck. Along the way, you'll discover knights who protect those who find the deck, werewolves seeking the deck to lift their curse, and a goblin who uses the deck to read your heroes' future.

This book presents Dungeon Masters with terrifying adversaries, deck-themed locations and traps, advice on introducing and customizing the deck in your campaign, and ways to use the deck to generate encounters and characters. And for players, it holds new magic items, organizations to join, and spells—all inspired by the deck's cards.

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